THE

FALL OF SAUL.

THE FALL OF SAUL.

A Sacred Epic Poem.

BY

JOHN GUNNING SEYMER, M.A.

OF ST. ALBAN'S HALL, OXFORD.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND MURRAY.

MDCCCXXXIX.

PREFACE.

It is to be observed, that the various compositions which make up what we call the Bible, aim but at one object, the setting before man, namely, the grand taint which has invaded, and ruined his nature, and the remedy which Divine wisdom and power have devised, and brought into action. It is the Bible which unveils the terrible, because all-embracing truth that the affections of the human race have departed from the Author of all good, whence has inevitably sprung an incessant and rapid declension of the moral condition of this family of creation. And it is from the same source we learn that it has pleased the supreme King, not only to arrest, but even to reverse this downward tendency by reprocuring for man, through the atonement, a participation of the Heavenly nature. The above may perhaps fairly be considered as a concise statement of the

sum of what is revealed in the inspired volume. The seat of the affections or passions, which we denominate the heart, is there set forth as the all important part of our constitution. It is thence that the ravage of this constitution has originated, and it is thence that the re-infusion of the Divine essence must pour renovation through the whole spiritual part of man, if this renovation is happily attained. These truths are every where enforced in the Bible, by precept and example. The ages when the sacred books have been successively produced, are often distant from each other, the condition and education of the writers dissimilar, the style diverse: there is the plainest narration, and there is the most enraptured poesy; but the Spirit of truth was the author of each, and hence, each discloses the same grand verities. Each points to the heart as the seat of the deadly malady, the source of the poisoned spring, till it becomes the abode of restoring grace, the depth whence rises that celestial principle so beautifully designated in Scripture—"The water of life." The sublime conference by night in which this mighty secret was imparted to the astonished ruler of Israel from the lips of the Son of God, is but an awful re-

echoing of the same doctrine every where illustrated by the earliest, as well as the latest histories which the Bible contains; nor is there perhaps one among the former of these, which bears more ample testimony to the solemn assurance given to Nicodemus, than the story of Saul, the first king of the chosen race; whilst, at the same time, the prominence of the contrasted characters, and the great minuteness of the narration, shed over this history a surpassing interest. Saul appears to have possessed many amiable qualities; he was brave, he loved his country, he was even highly sensible of the beauty of virtue, as we may gather from his pathetic address to David at the cave of Engedi, where the latter had given such proof of loyalty and affection. Nor was this all. Jehovah was pleased, in an especial manner, to mark Saul as his vicegerent. The Great Spirit, in a certain sense, rested upon this king, he felt sacred raptures, and his natural powers were augmented.

But the disease was yet at his heart, his affections were unreclaimed to the Supreme King. Earth was still their centre, the principle of moral decay (if the expression may be allowed,) was still at work, the effects of which could not but develop themselves;

and it is thus that the history of Saul becomes a beautiful comment on those remarkable words of our Saviour, which declare, that among those who shall be finally rejected by Heaven, there will be some, who will plead, and plead in vain, that they have even wrought miracles by the Divine authority. It is this character of the story of Saul which especially attracted the attention of the author. And if the following Poem shall be the means of impressing on a single reader, the truth, that out of the heart are indeed "the issues of life," he will not in vain have engaged in a subject, the especial loftiness of which, may well stand forth as an excuse for innumerable defects in the execution of his work.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

HER MAJESTY, THE QUEEN DOWAGER, (5 copies.)
Bishop of Bath and Wells.
Bishop of Llandaff, (2 copies.)
Bishop of Salisbury.
Duke of Roxburgh.
Marquis of Lansdowne.
Marchioness of Lansdowne.
Marchioness of Breadalbane.
Countess of Charlemont.
Earl of Suffolk, (2 copies.)
Earl of Ilchester.
Dowager Countess Roden.
Dowager Lady Rivers.
Earl Rivers.
Viscount Sidmouth, (2 copies.)
Viscountess Sidmouth, (do.)
Hon. Miss Addington.
Right. Hon. Lady Grenville.
Right Hon. Lady Anne Wilbraham.
Right Hon. Lady De Dunstanville.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Lady Noel Byron, (5 copies.)
Rev. Lord Charles Hervey.
Lord Denman, (5 copies.)
Dowager Lady Mordaunt.
Dowager Lady Cooper.
Lord Advocate of Scotland.
Lord Murray.
Lady Murray.
Lady Catherine Bisset, (2 copies.)
Lord Bolton.
Lady Drake.
Lady Grace Gore.
Lady Cooper, (2 copies.)
Lady Smirk.
Lady Davy, (2 copies.)
Lady Mary Hoare.
Sir Charles Lemon, Bart.
Sir Matthew Tierney.
Lady Tierney.
Lady Lloyd.
Sir Benjamin Brodie, (2 copies.)
Sir Charles Clarke, (5 copies.)
Lady H. Frampton.
The Chevalier Bunsen.
Lady Chatterton.
Lady Emily Pelham.
Lady Coleman, (2 copies.)
Sir Robert Inglis, Bart.
Lady Hayes, (2 copies.)
Sir M. S. P. Hayes, Bart. (2 copies.)
Lady Barry.
Hon. Mrs. Herbert.
Sir Thomas D. Acland.

Lady Acland.
Lady Smith, *The Down House.*
Right Hon. Sir Alex. Johnstone.
Lady Ashtown.
Sir G. Rose, Bart.
Lady Hannah Thorpe.
Lady Ainslie.
Lady Lloyd.
Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, (5 copies.)
Sir W. W. Pepys, Bart.
Lady Elizabeth Dutton.
Lady Trimblestone.
Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.
Lady Fortescue.
Lady Lucas Pepys.
Sir F. Cooper.
Lady Cooper.
Hon. Miss Catherine Flower.
Hon. Miss Broderick.

A.

Abbess, Rev. John.
Ackers, James, Esq. *The Heath, Ludlow.*
Ackers, Mrs. *Do. Do.*
Adams, Mrs., *Clifton.*
Ainslie, Douglas, Esq. *Scotland.*
A Lady, *Clifton.*
Alban Hall, Oxford, The Rev. the Principal of,
Allen, Miss *Bath.*
Anderdon, Captain *Do.*
André, Mrs. *Do.*
Arnold, Mrs. *Do.*
Atherley, E. Arthur, Esq. *Arundel.*
Audly, Miss, *Wick Hill, Brighton.*

B.

Baillie, Mrs. *Cavendish-square.* (10 copies.)
Baillie, Mrs. Joanna, *Hampstead.*
Baillie, Mrs. *Hampstead.*
Baillie, Wm. Hunter, Esq. *Cavendish-square.*
Baliol College, Oxford, The Rev. the Master of.
Bankes, W. J. Esq. *Old Palace-yard.*
Barnes, Rev. Dr. *Oxford.*
Barrett, James, Esq. *Castle Cary, Somerset.*
Bartlett, Rev. W. *Bath.*
Bartley, Mr. A. C. *Mitcham-green.*
Baskerville, — Esq. *Bath.*
Baskerville, Mrs. *Bath.*
Battell, Rev. Wm. *Bath.*
Bayley, Mrs. *Bristol.*
Becker, Mrs. *Bath.*
Benett, James, *Codbury-house, Somersetshire.*
Bennet, Miss M. A. *Norton-house, Wilts.*
Bennet, John, Esq. M. P.
Bennet, Wm. Esq. *Nottingham-place.*
Bennet, John, Esq. *Hendon.*
Bennet, Miss, *Norton-house, Wilts.*
Benson, Mrs. *Bath.*
Bentley, Mrs. *Bath.*
Bethel, Miss, *Upper Grosvenor-street.*
Birch, Rev. T. W. *Blandford.* (5 copies.)
Birch, Mrs. George, *Bath.*
Birch, Colonel, *Gower-street.*
Black, Miss, *Bath.*
Blatch, Rev. J. *Basingstoke, Hants.*
Blick, Rev. F., Prebendary of Lichfield.
Blount, G. S. Esq. *Baker-street.* (10 copies.)

Boswell, Mrs.
Bourne, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Bourne, W. Esq. *Kirk Ella, Hull.*
Bouwens, Miss, *Connaught-place.*
Bowdler, Charles Esq. *St. John's Wood.*
Bowles, Rev. D. G. *Chiswick.*
Bowles, Miss C. *Chiswick.*
Brand, Everard, Esq. *Eaton-square.*
Brand, Mrs. *Do.*
Brand, Miss, *Chiswick.*
Brazen Nose College, Oxford, The Rev. Vice-Chancellor of
Brodie, Mrs. *Salisbury.*
Brodie, W. B. Esq. M. P. *Do.*
Brymer, Rev. J. *Bath.*
Buckle, Rear Admiral, *Bath.*
Bushby, Mrs. Henry (5 Copies.)
Bushby, Mrs. *Portland-place.*

C.

Cabanel, D. Esq. *Somerset-place.* (2 copies.)
Caldecott, — Esq. *Rugby-lodge, Warwickshire.*
Caldy, Mrs.
Campbell, Mrs. M. *Sidmouth.*
Carey, Stafford, Esq. *Bedford-square.*
Carroll, Mrs.. *Brook-street, Bath.*
Carroll, Mrs. *Vane-street, Bath.*
Chapman, Mrs. *Bath.* (5 copies.)
Chapman, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Charleswood, Col.
Cheshire, Mrs. Johnson, *Clifton.*
Churchill, Rev. Wm. *Blandford.*

Church, Wm. Esq. *Bath.*
Clitherow, Col.
Clitherow, Mrs. *Brentford.*
Clough, Rev. Alfred, *Oxford.*
Coffin, Mrs. Pine, *Bath.* (2 copies.)
Coffin, Mrs. Pine, *Devon.*
Coffin, Rev. Pine, *Do.*
Coffin, Mrs. John Pine, *Bath.*
Cooke, Isaac, Esq. *Clifton.*
Copeland, Mrs. *Cheltenham.*
Coutts, Miss Burdett, *Stratton-street.* (2 copies.)
Cox, Rev. W. N. Vice-Principal of St. Mary Hall, *Oxford.*
Croft, Rev. Richard, *Exeter College, Oxford.*
Croft, Miss, *Guilford-street.*
Crook, Rev. F. *Upper Brook-street.*
Crook, Mrs. *Do.*
Curteis, John, Esq. *Devonshire-place.*
Curtis, John, Esq. *Do.* (3 copies.)

D.

Dansey, Mrs. Dansey, *Kidbroke-Lodge.*
Dashwood, Miss, *Weymouth.*
Daubeny, Colonel, *Bath.*
Daubeny, Miss, *Do.*
Daubeny, Rev. Giles, *Hindon, Wilts.*
Daubeny, Dr. *Oxford.*
Daubeny, Mrs. *Bristol.* (3 copies.)
Davis, Rev. John, *Cerne Abbas.*
Deffell, John, Esq. *Upper Harley-street.*
Deffell, Henry, Esq. *Do.*
Delaband, — Esq. *Bath.*

Dixon, Charles Esq. *Stansted, Sussex.*
Dodd, Rev. Philip, S. *Penshurst Rectory.*
Dolland, Mrs. *Bath.*
Downs, Mrs. *Marhood-hill, Devon.*
Duckworth, Miss, *Hyde-Park-street.* (2 copies.)
Dudgen, — Esq.
Duncan, P. Esq. *Oxford.*
Duncan, John, Esq. *Bath.*
Dunlop, Rev. A. P. A.M. *Oxford.*

E.

Edmonds, Mrs. *Cheltenham.* (5 copies.)
Ellers, Miss, *Bath.*
Etty, Rev. S. J. *St. Lawrence.*

F.

Farn, Edward, Esq. *Gray's-Inn-Square.*
Farquhar, — Esq.
Fleming, J. Esq. M. P. *Cavendish-square.*
Floyer, John, Esq. *Stafford, near Blandford.*
Floyer, Rev. Chas. *Hants.*
Foncart, Mrs. *St. Giles, Oxford.*
Ford, Miss, *Bath.*
Foulkes, Esq. *St. Giles, Oxford.*
Fox, Sackville Lane, Esq. *St James's-square.*
Freeman, Mrs. *Clifton.*

G.

G—, Mrs. *Bath.*
Gaisford, Mrs. *Deanery, Oxford.*
Garratt, Mrs, *Bath.*

Gilbert, Miss Hester, *East Bourne.*
Goodenough, — Rev. *Godmanstone, Dorset.* (5 copies.)
Goodwin, Miss, *Kidbroke-lodge.*
Gore, Miss, *Brunswick-square.*
Goring, H. Esq. *Deanery, Oxford.*
Gosling, W. Esq. *Leamington.*
Gosling, Miss, *Gloucester-place.*
Gould, Rev. Mitcomb, *Taunton.*
Gould, Mrs.
Gower, Rev. — *Stoke, Bucks.*
Granger, — Esq. *Exeter.*
Gratwick, Wm. Esq. *Arundel.*
Gray, Miss, *Deanery, Oxford.*
Gunning, Joseph, Esq. *Trafalgar-square.*
Gunning, Captain, *Gloucester-place.* (5 copies.)
Gunning, Mrs. *Bath.*
Gwynne, Miss, *Do.* (2 copies.)

H.

Haggitt, Mrs. *Belmont.*
Hales Miss, *Upper Brook-street.*
Hall, Mrs. *London.*
Hall, Rev. M. Sandys, *Oxford.*
Hallam, Henry, Esq. *Wimpole-street.*
Hallam, Miss, *Do.*
Hamilton, Miss, *Weymouth.*
Hammett, James, Esq. *Bath.*
Hammond, W. E. Esq. *Birmingham.*
Hampden, R. D. Regius Professor of Divinity, *Oxford.*
Hankin, Mrs. *Ware.*
Harcourt, Egerton Vernon, Esq. *Grosvenor-square.*

Harding, Mrs. *Bridge End.*
Harrison, Rev. — *Lambeth.*
Harriss, Rev. Wm. M. A.
Hay, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Hayes, Rev. John Warren.
Hayes, Rev. H. *Bath.*
Hilhouse, Mrs. *Clifton.*
Hilyar, — Esq. *Weymouth.*
Hilyar, Miss, *Do.*
Hoare, Mrs. *Hampstead Heath.*
Hoare, Mrs. Sarah, *Do.*
Hoare, Mrs. Charles, *Godstone, Surrey.*
Hodson, Venerable Geo. Archdeacon of Stafford.
Hope, Mrs. J. *Lewes.*
Horningham, Rev. Francis, *Wilts.*
Hughan, Mrs. *Cotswold-house.* (2 Copies.)
Hurdis, Mrs. M. *Croome-hill, Greenwich.*
Huskisson, Mrs. *Carlton Gardens.*
Hyde, Mrs. *Bath.*

I. J.

Jarvis, Mrs. *Doddington-hall, Lincoln.* (5 copies.)
Jeffreys, Mrs. *Brompton.* (3 copies.)
Jephson, Miss, *Cheltenham.*
Jekyll, Mrs. *Bath.*
Jenkinson, Captain, *Bristol.*
Jenkyns, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Ingleby, Clement, Esq. *Birmingham.*
Jocelyn, Miss, *Bath.*
Johnstone, Miss, *Downson.*
Jones, Mrs. Leslie, *Worting-house, Basingstoke.*

K.

Kenyon, J. Esq. *Harley-place.*
Kenyon, Edward, Esq. *Vienna.*
Kidd, Dr. Regius Professor of Physic, *Oxford.*
Kipling, Mrs. J. *Bath.*
Knapp, Rev. — *Clifton.*
Knapp, Arthur John, Esq. *Do.*

L.

Lally, Rev. W. M. LL. D. *Drayton-Basset.* (2 copies.)
Lambert, A. B. Esq. F. R. S.
Lane, J. N. Esq. *Kings Bromley.*
Lane, Mrs. *Do.*
Lane, Miss Tomline, *Litchfield.*
Langford, Miss, *Bath.*
Law, Rev. James, Chancellor, *Wells.*
Lawder, Mrs. *Bath.*
Lee, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Leeke, Mrs. Egerton, *Bath.*
Lemarchant, Mrs. *Sidmouth.*
Leslie, Mrs. *Regent's Park.* (2 copies.)
Lewes, Miss, *Brighton.*
Lewes, Major, *Arundel, Sussex.*
Lincoln College, The Rev. the Rector of. (5 copies.)
Littlehales, Mrs. *Marlow Lodge.*
Lloyd, Edward, Esq. *Altringham.*
Long, Mrs. *Maxwell-Hall.*
Loveday, Mrs. M. *Bath.*
Lowder, J. Esq. *Bath.*
Lowther, Charles, Esq. (2 copies.)

M

Mabbet, Mrs. *Lewes.*
Mc Kenzie, — Esq. *Regent's Park.*
Mackee, Rev. John, R. S. *Oxford.* (2 copies.)
Mc Lean, Charles Hope, Esq. *Wilton-crescent.*
Magdalen Hall Oxford, The Rev. The Principal of.
Maitland, Brownlow, Esq. *Cambridge.*
Malcolm, Mr. E. *Trinity College, Cambridge.*
Mallet, J. L. Esq. *Hampstead.*
Maltby, Mrs. *Bath.* (2 copies.)
Mapp, Miss, *Kilkenny-house, Bath*
Marcet, Mrs. *Stratton-street, Piccadilly.*
Marriott, — Esq. *Bath.*
Marrell, Mrs. Baker, *Oxford.*
Marrell, Mrs. Elizabeth, *Do.*
Marten, Mrs. D. *Bath.*
Mason, Mrs. E. *Do.*
Maxwell, E. Esq. *Trinity College, Cambridge.*
Maxwell, Rev. George, *Steepleton.* (2 copies.)
Meyrick, Miss, *Bath.*
Milligan, Robert, Esq. *Cavendish-square.*
Milligan Mrs. *Do.*
Milligan, Miss, *Do.*
Milligan, Miss, *Cotswold-house.*
Mitchell, A. Esq. *Bath.*
Moe, Mrs. *Kilkenny-house, Bath.*
Moor, James Carrick, Esq.
Morrice, J. Esq. *Upper Gower-street.*
Morris, Rev. Dr. *Rectory, Elstree.*
Morris, Mrs.
Morrison, Mrs. *Yeo Vale, Devon.*

Morrison, Miss, *Bideford.*
Mott John Thomas, *Bleching, Norfolk.*
Mott, Mrs. *Barningham, Norfolk.*
Murray, John, Esq. *Albemarle-street.*
Murray, Mrs. *Edinburgh.*

N

Nevinson, Mrs. *Alfred Place.*
Nicholas, Mrs. *Bath.*
Nicholl, J. Esq. LL.D.
Nutcombe, Mrs *Exeter.*

O

Ord, W. Esq. M. P. *Berkeley-square.*

P

Partridge, Miss, *Curzon-street.*
Partridge, Miss, *Norwich.* (2 copies.)
Pelham, Miss, *Cheltenham.*
Penruddock, Miss, *Tyfield, Wilts.*
Perkins, Shirley, Esq. *Sutton Colefield.*
Pickard, Mrs. *Sydney-place, Bath.*
Piers, Miss, *Do.*
Pitt, Miss, *Dorset.*
Pitt, William, Esq. *Okeford.*
Pollard, Mrs. *Bath.*
Pratt, Rev. J. J. A. M. *Oxford.*
Prosser, Rev. Dr. *Belmont.* (5 copies.)

R.

Ramsden, Mrs. C. *Bath.* (10 copies.)
Raymond, — Esq. *Weymouth.*

Reid, Mrs. *Grenville-street.*
Richard, Rev. J. L. Rector of Exeter College, *Oxford.*
Rigby, Mrs. *Oldfield Hall.*
Roberts, Mrs. Ellis, *Llanynis.*
Robinson, — Esq. *Oxford.*
Rocke, Mrs. *Clagenfurd House.*
Rogers, Samuel, Esq. *St. James's Place.* (2 Copies.)
Rooper, Rev. J. *Brighton.*
Rosenhagen, A. Esq. *Cheltenham.*
Rudge, E. Esq. *Wimpole-street.*

S.

Sabine, Major, R. A. *Woolwich.*
Scott, Thomas, Esq. *Do.*
Scraggs, Mrs. F. *Bath.*
Seymer, Miss E. *Oakford.* (2 Copies.)
Seymer, Henry Ker, Esq. *Blandford, Dorset.* (12 Copies.)
Seymer, Mrs. Ker, *Chester-square.* (4 Copies.)
Seymer, Rev. George, *Blandford.*
Seymour, — Esq. *Noel, Wilts.* (2 Copies.)
Sharpe, Mrs. *Warwickshire.*
Sherston, Mrs. *Clifton.*
Shittler, Rev. — *Milcombe.*
Skurray, Rev. Francis, *Wilts.*
Slade, Major, *Bath.*
Slater, Miss, *Hampstead.*
Smith, Mrs. Stafford. (2 Copies.)
Smyth, Wm. Esq. A.M. *Cambridge.*
Smythe, W. Esq. *Peter House, Cambridge.*
Smythe, Rev. *Ireland.* (2 Copies.)
Southey, Robert, Esq. LL. D.
Southey, Mrs. *Chiswick.*

Sproule, Mrs. *Bath.*
Spry, Dr. *Do.*
St. Lawrence, Rev. S. J. Etty, *Wooton.*
Stephens, Mrs. A. *Clifton.*
Stewart, Mrs. *Bath.*
Stirens, Mrs. *Sidmouth.*
Stockwell, — Esq. *Cheltenham.*
Stoddart, Rev. W. W. A.M.
Surtees, W. E. Esq. *Temple.*
Sykes, Mrs. Daniel, *Raywell, near Hull.*
Sykes, Mrs. John, *Kirk Ella, near Hull.* (2 Copies.)
Sykes, H. Esq. *Bath.*
Sykes, J. Esq. *Do.*

T.

Taylor, Henry, Esq. *South Audley-street.*
Terry, Mrs. *Basingstoke.*
Terry, Rev. Stephen, *Do.*
Tholly, Rev. Walter, *Vicarage, Preston.*
Thomas, Mr. Edward, *Brighton.*
Thomas, Inigo, Esq. *Sussex.*
Thomas, Hon. Mrs. *Do.*
Thompson, Mrs. Pearson, *Cheltenham.*
Thornton, H. Sykes, *Birchin-lane.*
Thornton, Major, *Bath.*
Tierney, Edward, Esq. *Dublin.*
Tierney, Matthew Edward, Esq. *Coldstream Guards.*
Tierney, Mrs.
Trevor, Mrs. *Anglesea.*
Touthey, Mrs. *Bath.*
Turrett, Mrs. *Alsop Terrace.*
Turvin, J. H. Esq. *Ware.*

U. V.

Venables, Rev. J. *Buckland.*
Vivian, G. Esq. *Albemarle-street.*
University College, Oxford, The Rev. the Master of
Vowel, Miss, *Bath.*

W

Walker, Rev. Richard, *Magdalen College, Oxford.*
Wall, Mrs. *Oxford.*
Waller, J. Lewis, Esq. *Hampstead.*
Ward, Mrs. *West Hill, Cowes.*
Warner, Rev. H. Lee, *Tiberton Court.*
Warner, Hen. Lee, Esq. *Do.*
Warren, Mr. Pelham, *Wimpole-street.* (5 Copies.)
Warren, Rev. John, *Huntingdon.*
Warren, Brownlow, C. Esq. *Oxford.*
Warren, Miss, *Lydiard House.*
Warren, Mrs. *Bedford-square.*
Warren, Rev. Henry, *Sussex.*
Watson, Mrs. *Bath.*
Webber, Mrs. *Humble Cliff, Southampton.*
Wegg, Mrs. *Upper Brook-street.*
Welch, Mrs. *Bath.*
West, Mrs. Colonel, *Devon.*
Whately, Rev. Thomas, *Salop.*
Whately, Mrs. Thomas, *Do.* (2 Copies.)
Whately, Wm. Esq. *Plainfield, Hants.*
Whately, Wm. Esq. jun. *Christ Church, Oxford.*
Whately, Hen. Esq. *Rugby.*
Whately, Miss, *Bath.*

Whately, Miss Mary, *Bath.*
White, Mrs. William, *Oxford.*
Whitehead, Miss, *Bath.*
Wickham, John, Esq. *Batcombe, Somerset.*
Wickham, Rev. Trelawney, *Charlton House.*
Wickham, Thomas Provis, Esq. *Weymouth.*
Wickham, Rev. Provis, *Somerset.*
Williams, Phillip, Esq. *Bedford Place, Oxford.* (2 Copies.)
Williams, Rev. Charles, *Notts.*
Williams, Rev. Charles, *Ruthin, N. W.*
Wilmot, Mrs. *Dublin.*
Wilson, Rev. H. B. *St. John's, Oxford.*
Wintle, Rev. Thomas, B.A. *Do.*
Wolferston, P. Esq.
Woodcock, Rev. Dr. *Oxford*
Woods, Miss, *Chichester.*
Wordsworth, Wm. Esq.
Waldo, Mrs. Worting, *near Basingstoke.*
Wrightson, Miss E. *Sevenoaks.*
Wrightson, Mr. J. B. *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.*
Wrightson, Miss, B. *Doncaster.*
Wruggs, G. P. Esq. *Birmingham.*

Y.

Yea, Miss, *Weymouth.*

RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INSERTION IN THE PRECEDING

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Dowager Countess of Belmore, *Bath.*
Lady Fortiscue.
Lady F. Bouverie.
Lady Elizabeth Baker, *Ranston, Dorset.*
Sir Edward Baker, *do.*
Miss Baker, *do.*
Miss Geraldine Baker, *do.*
Mrs. Goodlake, *Wadley, Faringdon.*
Miss Master, *The Abbey, Cirencester.*
Mrs. Farquharson, *Langton, Blandford.*
Miss Lowther.
Mrs. Jones, *Brompton.*
George Bushby, Esq.
— Western, Esq. *Tattingstone Park.*
Mrs. Paynter, *Richmond.*

THE

FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK I.

NOTE PRELIMINARY

This Book is intended to account for a singular fact, connected with the appearance of Samuel, to Saul, at Endor, the recognition namely of the king, by the witch on the rising of the phantom. The Author is aware that many persons are of opinion, that the power, attributed to the sorceress of Endor, existed only in the imagination of that time, and that it was by immediate Divine interposition, that an impostor was permitted to invoke the Prophet. Such persons will of course object to this Book, but their idea is only an assumption, and the Author has simply followed the transaction, as it is recorded.

THE ARGUMENT.

Brief apostrophe to the prophetic trance, as described by the prophet Balaam, with a proposition of the subject of the Poem—An invocation of Divine aid—A brief recapitulation of the principal events in the history of Saul and David—An apostrophe to envy—The time when the Poem opens is specified—The Sorceress of Endor, anxious to know whether she should escape detection, or whether she should be discovered by Saul, as the other witches had been, calls up her familiar spirit—The rising of the spirit, and his aspect is described—The Sorceress puts her question, to which he returns a plausible, yet evasive answer—She expresses mistrust, and alludes to the history of her mother, who like herself, had practised sorcery, and withal, she threatens the spirit unless he satisfies her doubts—The spirit replies to her accusations, professing entire indifference to her menace—She answers him in a tone of scorn, and dismisses him—Brief soliloquy of the Sorceress—She departs to Endor—This Book occupies the first night of the Poem—The scene is on the shore of the Dead Sea



THE FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK I.

O! FOR a rapture like the sacred thrill
Which shook the breast of that rebellious seer,
Who thrice struck down the hope of Moab's king,
With glorious visions he might not conceal!
That I might sing, as fits my lofty theme,
How the first monarch of the chosen race
(Crushed by a load of soul-corroding crime,
And tortured by the storm of hate unslaked
And impotent remorse,) at length was hurled
By Heaven's high justice, down to death and shame.

Spirit of taintless light, by him beheld
In emblem, who erst saw the sevenfold fire
Before the throne of the Celestial King;

Primeval Essence, who, with lonely glance
Shot through eternity, explorest the vast
Of wisdom infinite, thy glorious self
That wisdom; from itself, thy nature still
Quaffing the river of its endless bliss;
Yet procreant of thine own beatitude,
Disdain'st not, with the lowly heart to dwell,
Since for the deed, by matchless love achieved,
Thy visitings to mortal breasts, (though girt
By night self-gendered, and with powers accursed
In foul rebellion leagued) are revouchsafed;
Guide Thou my venturous lay. Purge from my soul
The mists that curtain-up our drowsy sense
From heavenly radiance; and, with musings high
(That part not, like the dreams of earth-born fire)
My heart infuse, if haply thus, my notes
By Thee inspired, may with Thy voice arise
Not unresponsive, and for beauteous truth
Contend. So not all vainly shall my thought
Scarce less than thrice ten hundred years o'erleap
With backward flight, whilst it essays to wake
Once more, the shadows of the dusky past.

Now had the seer (who still from youth to age,

Through weal and woe had led the chosen seed,)
Wept by his orphan country, laid him down
In mortal sleep; and the beloved of Heaven,
(Driv'n by the Monarch whom he served with faith
Which hatred could not quench, to ask a home
Of the lone waste,) had sought Philistia's king;
His hands yet reeking with Philistia's blood,
And, at his side, the brand her champion bore
What time in Elah's vale his vaunts were crush'd
Beneath the matchless arm of Jesse's son.
The Hebrew king hath heard, and loathed the song
By dark-eyed maidens raised to hail the man
Who quelled Goliah's force: Woe, woe to Saul!
Then first the dæmon in his breast awoke
That urg'd him on against Jehovah's self
To rear his impious hand: then first in vain
Was tried the magic of the minstrel's string
Till tears were wept from eyes that should have shone
Upon a father's glory, and the blood
Of Israel's priests polluted Israel's land.

O, envy! rankest of the weeds that taint
This human mould, another's bliss thy life,
Thou quaffest venom from another's smiles:

E'en virtue's self supports thy baneful growth;
Her gaze is on thee, but thy nature veils
With its own blackness, each celestial grace.
So coolest rain distill'd from southern skies,
And perfumed by the breath of vernal flowers
On soft Sicilia's plains, in vain descends
To Etna's raging bosom, where commixed
With sulphurous fires it but augments the strife
Which far within, the rocky giant rends.

But to my theme. The blast of war is blown,
And Gath and Ekron open wide their gates,
To pour an iron tide of warriors forth
On Palestina's sons. Unnumbered cars
Impetuous, whirl the lightning host along,
Unnumbered bows are brac'd, whose twang shall spread
A deathful tempest o'er the embattled field.

'Tis night upon the Asphaltine Lake, and hushed
Is the last rustle of the vulture's wing
Amid the crags that frown above the vale,
Where erst the cursed cities sinn'd and fell.

A lonely form in female garb array'd,

Bends o'er that waveless deep? Her hoary locks
Float like the standard of triumphant time
Around her sunken cheek; and yet her foot,
Prints with so firm a step that gloomy shore,
That more by vigil, or the wintry stream
Of care, seem wrought the furrows in that face,
Than by the tooth of all-corroding age.
Her fixed gaze is on the setting moon,
Whose infant crescent, after transient course;
Is sweeping swiftly down the blue expanse:
Her arched brows are bent, and on her lips
Is soundless motion, as when poplar shades
Feel the light footstep of the summer gale,
Yet whisper not of his ethereal way.

What giant-form is rising on the lake,
Like the dark offspring of the sun and flood
Exhaled at morning hour? Upon his front
(That wears the human semblance,) sits a gloom
Of dark remembrance, and of darker dread,
And present anguish. O for one long sigh
To break the stillness of that spectre's breast,
On which the present, past, and future hour,
Hath piled the burden of immortal woe.

High, and more high, he rears his mighty bulk,
Till lofty as some cloud-surrounded rock,
Darkling he stands upon that unblest lake.
Within his phantom hand, what seems a staff
Is grasped, to which, the tallest of the sons
Of India's, or of vast Columbia's groves,
Were but a reed which bends before the gale.
His eyes (which ceaseless flash, as when all night,
After a day of heat, the fire of Heaven
Plays round the parched sky,) are steadfast fix'd
On that lone mortal, who unshrinking met
His baleful glance, whilst he her thus bespake.

"Why to the depths hath pierced thy muttered spell
Woman of power? Reply, this hour is thine."

To whom the sorceress: "By that dread league
(Which binds thee to my will, till earth and fire,
And air, and water, claim the scattered wrecks
Of this dissolved compound,) shadow, say;
Shall the fell hunter triumph, or my haunt
Still foil his search? Say, shall my parting breath
Be breathed, as fades the floweret sigh by sigh,
Exhaling all its fragrant spices forth

Into the lap of æther; or betray'd,
Must I at length be dragged to chains and death?"

To whom the spectre. "Mortal of strange might,
Fear not, for sooner shall the buried seer
Who erst at Ramah taught the favored race,
Start from the tomb, and in thy lonely cave
Pour all the future on the trembling sense:
Sooner shall power from weakness succour seek,
Sooner the hunter all aghast shall stand
Before his trembling prey, than shall the tribes
Of Israel track thy steps. Am I dismissed?"

As thus the phantom said, a transient flash
Passed o'er that human face, but soon the beam
By doubt or pride was quench'd, whilst on the shade
She bent a look that well the truth might tear
From falsehood's self, as she him thus bespake:

"It should be well; yet I mistrust thee spirit;
Some say that Israel's God is first in power,
And that he hates my mystic art, hates thee,
Aye and contemns thy might, and this dark hour
Rolls back the tide of time. Again, methinks,

I feel the moment, when on such a night
Upon this blasted shore with eager ear
I drank the spell that binds thee. Taught by her
Who gave me life, anon I summoned thee.
And we were leagued. O mournful was the day
That rose upon that night! Again I hear
The tramp of men, again behold the eye
Of Israel's seer, and Israel's ruthless king.
Why camest thou not to succour our distress?
Why scream'd I then in vain, the potent spell,
Which though but whispered, summoned thee to night?
Say it is false, and that they never tore
My wretched mother from these struggling arms;
Say that with frantic feet I ne'er pursued
Those drinkers of our blood, nor e'er beheld
The stony tempest mangle the fair form
From whence I sprang. O if in thy dark world
There grows a drug to charm the backward eye
Of memory, then pour it on my brain,
And veil the vision of the hateful past.
Thy will is still opposed to Israel's God;
The power was wanting then, and thou wert chain'd,
Chain'd by his high behest whom thou so oft
Affectest to defy. I know it now,

The fearful secret which my mother's shade
Strove to reveal. Why else (when twice invoked
By necromantic art, and urged with tears
To pierce the cloud that hides the coming hour
From mortal eye,) hath she stood sad and pale,
Her shadowy finger pointed still at me,
Whilst from her quivering lip no sound was heard
Till horror did congeal the falling brine
Which grief had summon'd from my sickening heart.
Why else, but that she treads that unseen land
Where dark conjecture ends, and weal or woe
In doom supreme hath swallowed fear and hope,
And thus hath known thy impotence, which yet
Some power occult forbids her to unfold?
Speak spirit, own thy weakness, or thy guile;
And rid me of these doubts which taint with death
Each moment of my life, or by the chain
That viewless binds the frame of things, I swear
That 'neath the waters of yon sulphurous lake
Thy deathless essence whelmed in stench and gloom
Shall languish hopeless, till my latest hour
Dissolves the charm by which I hold thee bound."

She ceased: but as the briny wilderness

Under a starless night still heaves its breast
Where late was traced in foam the whirlwind's path,
So did the quickening throb, and hue of fire
That shook her heart, and burnt upon her cheek,
Reveal the storm of passion, whilst the shade
(His aspect changeless, and his voice unmov'd,)
Thus poured his mingled strain of scorn and guile.

"Now by the law that bids me mock decay,
And gaze upon eternity, I swear
I did account thy spirit as refined
(By vigil, and the voice of nature, caught
By thy unslumbering sense,) from each base fear
Which darkly thralls thy kindreds of the dust,
Wreak earth-born, wreak on me thy powerless wrath,
Chain me beneath yon sulphur-breathing flood
Till the gross stream by which thy life is fed
Sucked drop by drop, by time, or fouled at once
By some envenomed blast, shall cease to play,
And yield its channel for the raptured worm
To trace the labyrinth in his tortuous sport.
Yet ere thou quit thee of my potent aid,
Ere thou shalt render vain the nightly watch,
The oath of fear, the rites by flashing fires

And muttered spells performed, ere thou shalt fall
From power to weakness, by thyself condemned
To draw thy breath in fear, till haply traced
By some fierce zealot of the hostile tribes,
Thou shalt deplore the madness of this night;
Ere by thyself thou shalt be thus undone,
Hear me, weak mortal. Say, since first thy voice
Could call my essence from these elements,
When have I striven, or by force or fraud
Against thy bidding? Say, have I not sped
(Swift as the star that cuts the evening sky,
Robed in the tints which sun and shower diffuse
Over this lower world,) on thy behests?
And if in one dread hour of need thy voice,
(Benumbed by terror,) uttered not the words
That thrill through nature, did I then betray
Because I came not? Should the gale ne'er wake
Whose tepid wing diffuses the sweet rain,
Wouldst thou accuse the clouds, because they sleep
High o'er the plain of Ocean, or around
The lonely mountain top? What are effects
But blossomings of causes bound by fate
Each to its secret spring, which he who holds
The power to wield, should wield. This power was thine,

But know, that if one mystic syllable
Of that strange spell, which vibrates to my sense
Remote or near, be wanting, the lone wind
That wanders moaning through the devious gloom
Of some vast forest, might as soon prevail.
Accuse not then my malice, but thy fear,
Which raising in thy mind her phrenzied voice,
And pouring all the future on thy sense,
Confounded memory. And dost thou doubt
My force? O hate! O scorn! that I must speak
Thus to the child of a poor fleeting hour,
And canst thou doubt my force which triumphs still
Against all power? Did I not render vain
The counsels of the Seer whose wisdom swayed
Of yore the bosom of the Hebrew king,
Till by my magic to rebellion wrought
He strove against his God? Have I not rushed
Upon his bosom like the desert blast,
Poisoned the stream of thought, and all his soul
To madness worked? Witness his armed hand
Against the life of Israel's champion reared.
Did I not render vain the oath of peace
When in Engedi's and Hachilah's wild,
The son of Jesse saved his thankless king?

Hath not my power to fierce Philistia linked
The man by whom Philistia's hope was quenched?
And is not he with mighty Achish ranged,
Whom Hebrew virgins erst with song and dance,
Hailed from the slaughter of the sons of Gath?
And whilst the echoes to that dark-eyed band
Told back the tale of pride, did I not plant
Deep in the breast of Saul, the cankering thought
Which, from that hour, hath gnawed his inmost heart?
Such, mortal, is my *malice*, to have still
Obeyed with lightning speed thy slightest breath,
And such my *weakness*, to have still defied
His will, whom Israel's tribes account supreme.
Pronounce my doom, which nor in hope nor fear
I here await; for as the rain-drop strikes
The abyss of Ocean, so must mortal wrath
Fall unperceiv'd upon a deathless spirit."

He ended, and his accents deep and sad,
Smote on the heart, as (when the lonely ear,
Drinks at dead-night the moan of Ocean's wave
On some projecting steep,) the soul grows sick;
And thus the sorceress in dauntless tone,
Returning scorn for scorn, swift answer made.

"Well, hast thou spoken, phantom, for what e'er
The cause that kept thee from my hour of need,
'Twas not thy will, which hath been lost in mine
Since first my searching spirit tracked the law
That fixed the eternal sympathies of things.
Nor when my power shall end wilt thou be free;
Thou art but as a drop in that strong tide,
Which, urged by fate, or by some master mind,
Sweeps through the channel of eternity.
And wherefore vauntest thou, that thou hast thralled
The breast of Israel's king? Did not the tone
Of David's lyre suffice to chase thee thence?
Why didst thou quail before a mortal's strain?
What unknown influence shook those magic chords?
I tell thee, spectre, thou art not supreme,
No more than is the meanest form that crawls,
Or cleaves the air, or cuts the watery plain.
And wherefore dost thou breathe thy scorn at me?
What I *shall* be, I know not; what I *am*
But faintly glimmers through a mist of doubts:
But yet whate'er my being, it hath force
To bind thy haughty nature, and till life
Shall fade in gentle, or in swift decay,
I still will fearless meet futurity.

Think not thy words deceive me, well I know,
Thy soft ethereal essence ill would brook
To dwell beneath yon pestilential tide,
Pent in the bosom of a sulphurous rock,
From the far circuit of the elements.
Think not that I upon thy succour lean,
For from his rising to his setting hour
As the great sun looks steadfast on the sky,
Or dark with tempest, or serene in calm,
So my firm spirit by itself upheld,
Shall stand in joy or woe, till comes the change
That mist-like hangs upon this lower world.
And what shall then befall, whether I plunge
To chill forgetfulness, or gliding hence,
Like a soft vapour to some distant clime,
There live again, I fear not. This, let fate
(Who mocks alike my power and thine,) decree.
But soft, my hour is waning, and the breeze
Moves with a swifter, and a colder tread.
With note more fitful, screams the bird of night,
The grasp of sleep relaxes on the sense,
And rebel fancy leads her airy train
In less capricious dance, as reason dawns.

Dissolve thee, phantom, into viewless air,
Thou art dismissed."

She spake, and at her word
The space was void where late that shadow seemed
To tread the Asphaltine Lake. "Away (she cried,)
"Proud spirit on thy secret course untracked
By ought save destiny. I'll to my cave
At Endor, for the sun must not behold
My steps upon this joyless strand. These plants
Whose veins are filled with many a potent juice
Would raise suspicion in the mortal heart."

She said, and winding thence with cautious pace,
She reached a bending rock, beneath whose arch
Her faithful dromedary stood, then sprang
Light to the panther's skin that decked his sides,
And like a cloud that rides the whirling blast,
Sped through the darkness on her swift career.

END OF BOOK I.

THE

FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK II

NOTE PRELIMINARY TO THE SECOND BOOK.

Some difficulty hangs over that part of the history of Saul, where it is said that he enquired of the Lord, after he had slain the priests, except Abiathar, who fled to David. Because it should seem that the breast-plate, in which were set the Urim and Thummim, might only be worn by the eldest son, of the eldest branch of the house of Aaron. We know, however, that Saul did enquire of the Lord, and by Urim too, for the sacred historian expressly says, "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." It has been thought by some, that the kings of Israel might themselves enquire the will of Jehovah, but this seems at variance with the general scope of what is revealed on the subject. It is, upon the whole, an easy supposition that Saul on this occasion employed a priest, who was descended from one of the younger branches of Aaron's family, and who therefore had escaped the slaughter of the house of Ahitub. As to the manner in which the Urim and Thummim contributed to the manifestation of the Divine Will, we can only conjecture; nor is one assumption concerning it scarcely more or less tenable than another.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Israelites being encamped on Mount Gilboa, and the Philistines in Shunem, Jonathan (the eldest of Saul's three sons) walks abroad from his tent, a little before day-break, in meditation—Abner, son of Ner, cousin of Saul, and chief officer in the Hebrew army, encounters him, and relates how he had been alarmed by a terrible dream of the King, on which account he had sought Jonathan—The Prince and Abner confer thereupon—Doeg, the Edomite, once the principal herdsman of Saul, but now one of his counsellors, is seen returning from the Philistine camp—He is questioned by Jonathan and Abner, and replies, that he had been to spy the enemy, giving, withal, a favourable account of what he had seen—The Prince answers with appro-

bation, though in a manner which implies suspicion—He re-enters the Hebrew camp—Day dawns—Saul awakes with tokens of perturbation, and gives several orders to Abner—Doeg comes to the King, who interrogates him as to the appearance of the Philistine camp—Doeg, in his reply, gives an opposite description to that which he had given to Jonathan, drawing a dreadful picture of the strength of the foe, and concludes by telling Saul that David (the son of Jesse) and his followers, were among the enemy—The King, enraged at the intelligence, gives him a command, which he opposes, till being threatened with instant death he feigns compliance—The voice of Michal, Saul's younger daughter, who had sought the Hebrew camp with a view of attempting a reconciliation between David and her father is heard, pleading for admission to the royal tent—She enters—Her appearance is described—The King addresses her in great anger, but afterwards relenting, causes every one to withdraw except Michal, whom he embraces and soothes—Their conference—The King tells her his dream and opens the calamities of the state, to which she proposes as a remedy that her father should be reconciled to David, and recall him to Israel—That he should dismiss Doeg from his councils, &c. urging, at the same time, the efficacy of repentance, and mentioning a plan she had imagined for ascertaining whether David's loyalty was shaken—The King agrees to her proposal and she seeks Jonathan—Doeg's rage on account of the secret conference of Saul and Michal—He returns to the King's tent, and, by inventing a plan of the enemy to surprise the Hebrew camp with the help of David on the approaching night, he succeeds at length in re-awakening the suspicion of Saul, and re-establishing his own influence, and it is finally agreed that an embassy, headed by Jonathan and Doeg, shall be sent to the Philistines to prove the truth of Doeg's story, who receives at the same time a charge to kill David, and an order for the departure of Michal from the Hebrew camp—The Princess in the meantime awaits Jonathan in great anxiety, and after hearing that the messenger whom she had dispatched for the Prince had failed to find him, at length receives the

order for her departure on account of the pretended danger, and after a vain remonstrance she sets out for Gallim with an escort. —This book occupies the greater part of the first day—The scene lies in the camp of Saul, except at the commencement, where it is just without the camp.

BOOK II.

Now had our rolling planet almost swept
The fields of Asia, to the verge of night,
When from the tent where Israel's monarch lay,
(Wrapped in a short forgetfulness of grief,)
Walked forth the Prince, whose mighty soul yet propped
A nation's tottering hope, a bow (whose string
Rang like the voice of death,) was in his grasp,
And at his side his rattling quiver hung,
Upon the gleam his eye a moment bent
Of fierce Philistia's watch-fires, whilst a tide
Of thoughts upon his noble front was traced
Which thus in oft suspended accents broke:

"False peace, false silence, soon the last bright star
Shall quit his nightly watch, and render up
Yon fields of azure to the glance of day

O ere that day shall die, what deeds of blood
May spread the vulture's meal, or on the dust
Of Gilboa, or of Shunem. Whence this voice
That whispers sadly from the coming hour,
To my presageful heart, as steals the sigh
Of some vast shade untrod by mortal foot,
Upon his ear, who first, with daring step,
Must pierce the wild? Yet no, this thrill of fear
Is from the past, and reason, (like the flash
That rends the thunder-cloud,) but shews the gloom
That hangs around our house. Yes, son of Saul,
Thy sire against himself hath rear'd his hand,
Have not our sacred priests been stretched in blood?
And he by whom the great Goliah fell,
Where is he now? But soft, who comes this way?"

He said, and glancing where the footstep fell,
Beheld the captain of the Hebrew host,
Who, striding swiftly through the gloom of night,
Descended toward the plain, to whom the Prince—

"Hail, mighty Abner! Is the King at rest?
Why com'st thou from the tents? Is ought in hand?"

To whom the son of Ner: "Stand there. Who calls?
God save thee, light of Israel's tribes. Great Prince,
Thy sire yet sleeps, if sleep that may be called
Which more than waking horror shakes the soul
And pours into one hour the grief of years."

Then thus the son of Saul: "How meanest thou?
An hour ere midnight fell, I left him wrapt
In deep repose." To whom the warrior:

"Our guards had been relieved, our nightly fires
Fresh heaped, and on my couch I musing lay,
When from the royal tent there came a cry
That rent my soul: 'Save, Israel!—save your king!
The archers strike, the son of Jesse bends
The unerring bow.' I instant marked the voice
That oft hath called our tribes to victory;
And rushing to his tent, beheld the guards
With looks aghast, around our slumbering king.
His hand, unconscious, grasped that spear, which erst
The youthful slayer of Goliah seized,
When at Hachilah, on our rest he stole.
His eyes were fixèd, and his voice was raised

As for the war-shout; and he cried, 'My son,
My son, they come, the uncircumcisèd come.
Where is the tamer of Goliah's might,
He whom the virgins sang? Slain by his king
In dark Engedi's cave. No, no, he lives
To hate, to torture Saul. Hence, spectre, hence.
Louder! yet louder! sweep thy mighty harp
Thou son of Jesse. So! I am once more
A king. I do defy thee, spirit. Hence!'
And then he laugh'd in scorn, and from his hand
Let fall the javelin, and some proposed
To wake our monarch from so dire a sleep.
Yet to my will they yielded, and I came
To seek thee here." To whom the Son of Saul:

"O! Abner, Abner! I am sick at heart,
'Tis not the glare of fancy's fitful beam
Which thus can make the future and the past
O'erleap the gulf that severs them, to vex
With dreams my sire's repose. It cannot be
But there is wrath on high, against our house.
But say, How views the host the coming fight?
Will they abide the fierce Philistine's power?"
To whom thus Abner:—

"Prince, our tribes are bold,
Yet much I fear the rumour of this night
Will creep like ice among their hearts; 'twere best
We seek the tents and renovate their fires.
But who comes yonder? By the life of Saul!
It is that Edomite who first revealed
The flight of David. Doeg, whence art thou?"

Then he: "I come from the Philistine camp,
Whither I hasted yesterday to spy
Their force, and render service to your king.
Suspicion's self now guards their trench, for well
I wot, incessant overthrow (that still
Hath stretched in tombless death his bravest chiefs)
Hath taught proud Achish to confess with fear
The prowess of your tribes; and eye and tongue
Vied each with each in nicest scrutiny,
Ere 'mid their tents I placed my venturous foot.
My garb and speech lent colour to my tale,
And fierce Philistia's princes were deceived.
Meanwhile, I scanned the camp, and anxious watched
Till night and silence marked the hour for flight.
All spoke of terror; chieftains still in arms,
Speechless, and joyless, spread the evening meal;

And ere I fled, I heard, whilst some did chafe
In angry whispers at their haughty king,
Who thus, forgetful of unnumbered woes,
Could dare again the might of Israel."

To whom the prince: "Why, this is well. If thus
Thou shalt confirm the courage of our tribes,
That deed may half raze out the act of blood,
Which, to these eyes, hath stampt upon thy brow—
Doeg, thou know'st the rest. Seek we the king."

He said, and turned him toward the Hebrew camp.
Meanwhile, as when the approaching symphony
Of some loved strain breaks on the list'ning ear
Half caught from far, till swells the nearer tone
Upon the raptured soul, so o'er the sky
Of Palestina broke that soft, calm light
Which doth proclaim the dawn; the dying fires
(That thro' the live-long night to foemen's eyes
Held the fierce token of defiance forth)
Gleamed faint and motionless, and from the tents
Arose a mingled hum. And now the king
Who led the chosen race, beheld the day,

And starting from his couch, with breath convulsed,
Robed him in silence, and to Abner said,

"Bid to my tent the Edomite, and thou
Look to the plain, and marshal forth the bands
That still keep watch on those uncircumcised:
And let Melchishua, the prophet, seek
If haply to his soul Jehovah's will
Hath been, in visions of the night, revealed.
If so, 'tis well. If not, then let him stand
Upon some charmèd ground and pray for light.
Or if in dreams he trusts, then let him sleep
Again, on crag, or open plain, or where
His soul most drinks the influence divine.
Begone, yet stay. Go bid the priest once more
By victims, and by Urim's sacred light,
E'en from the rising to the setting sun
Interrogate high Heaven. Tell him his king
Hangs on his word. Forget not my commands."

He said, and was obeyed, and Doeg stood
Alone within the royal tent, to whom
The son of Kish thus spake:

"How hast thou sped?

Say, didst thou reach the camp? Thanks for that sign.
What tidings of the foe? Is there a hope
We may defy his power? Is high resolve
Graved on the brow of Achish? Does he burn
At once to dare the fight? Or do the fields
Of Elah, and of Michmash on his heart
Lie heavy? Speak. Ah, speak! My eager soul
Would rush to thine, and yet as raves a band
Of famished beasts around some fallen prey,
So my swift questions, with themselves at war,
Make vain their mutual appetite."

Then thus,
With voice suppressed, the Edomite replied:
"Swear to conceal my tale from all the host,
Or death and torture shall not drag it forth."

To whom the King: "Speak on; for Israel's God
Do so to Saul, and more, if I divulge
Ought of thy secret."

To whom Doeg thus:
"Why should I tell the perils of my course?
What troops of foes I met, or 'scaped; from whom

I fled, and whom with art deceived; and how,
When at the hostile camp, (like one who treads
In moonless night, upon some rock, that hangs
High o'er the surge,) so on the utmost bourn
That severs life from death, I fearless walked?
Enough; the oath was passed, and with these eyes
I scanned the host of Achish, spread abroad,
Unnumbered as the desert-breathed swarms
That on some unblessed clime descend, and snatch
The shade and fragrance of the widowed spring;
Philistia is all armed, and in the streets
Of Gath and Ashkelon, no warrior's foot
Imprints the dust; whilst in their quivers clank
More shafts than ever reeds on widest marsh
Bent to the summer gale. On every front,
Sits scorn of fortune, and futurity
To them, hath lost its doubtfulness. The plain
Is trenchèd deep with war-cars, and the breeze
Scarce fills the nostrils of their steeds, whose foam
Might change a sandy waste to a morass.
Thou start'st, but hear me, King. 'Tis not the force
Of rushing chariots, nor of lightning steeds,
Nor tens of thousands, skilled to hurl the spear,
Or pour swift death from far with twanging bows

That fires the breast of Achish, but 'tis he
Who still hath mocked thy power, that shepherd born
Who, with his rebel followers, foully leagued
Against his country, aids thy deadliest foes.
If I speak false, then lay me in the dust;
If true, why point at me that flashing brand?
I tell thee, monarch, I beheld the son
Of Jesse, in the fierce Philistine's camp,
And that same arm by which Goliah fell
Now shields the King for whom Goliah fought.
I marked him well, as at the royal board
He sat, and feasted with the Lords of Gath."

To whom the King, in wrath, with stamping foot
And hands together struck. No more! I'll hear
No more! Fly hence, the fit is on me. Hence!
What! shall the pine (whose rock-girt root hath pierced
Deep to terrestrial darkness, and whose top
Hath sported with the mountain-ranging storm
As with a vernal breeze,) be dragged to earth
By the first reptile's weight, which from the dust
Shall climb into its shade, that I am thus
Plucked down by treason's hand? What, art thou here?

Slave, do my bidding. Speed to Abner: say
It is my pleasure, that with chosen band,
He seek the host of Achish, and command
The son of Jesse instant to my camp,
Bid him fall prostrate at his monarch's feet,
Ere, on the battle field, my arm shall crush
Yon legions into silence. What wouldst thou?
Have I not spoken? Art thou sick of life?"

Then Doeg: "Monarch, I intreat thee, hear.
Remember thou hast sworn."

To whom thus Saul:
"And dost thou too betray? Behold this arm.
Full many a mail-clad breast hath felt its might.
Dispute once more (if but with look) my will,
And thy last breath shall mingle with the wind."

He said, and raised his blade, while in his face
The red and pale were mingled, as (when o'er
Some raging cataract there breaks at night
The flash electric) fire is mixed with foam.
The Edomite replied not, but with act
Of feigned submission, turned him to depart,

When from without the tent, a voice was heard
Of deep distress.

"Hold off," it cried: "The king
Needs help; the fit that oft hath shook his breast,
Is on him now. I charge thee stay me not."
"Princess, he did command" (was the reply,)
"That none, (on pain of death)"——

"Slaves, am I not
The daughter of your king? Again he groans.
I will be heard. The guilt be on my head!"

She spake, and at her words the ample folds
That hung around the royal tent, unclosed,
When in the presence of the son of Kish
Michal, the fairest of his daughters, stood.
Her eyes were lustrous, and her locks still dark,
As in that hour of unenduring bliss,
When first her shepherd warrior she saw,
And lov'd, and won in vain. Around her form
Still play'd the lightness of the climbing plant,
Whose graceful stem (new born of vernal beams
And showers from azure skies distilled,) springs up,
Smooth, and unfettered in some lonely vale:

Yet on her cheek there was a tint that told
Of some remembered grief, as round the flower
The leafy curtains droop, when far within
The loathsome canker sucks its nectarous breath.
See seemed in act to speak, but when the glance
Of Doeg fell on her, a transient fire
Flashed on her features, and the imprisoned breath
Within her swelling breast was still withheld
By some emotion dire, whilst horror, scorn,
Unwilling fear, deep hate, across her face
In that dark moment swept. The Hebrew king
Regarded not, but thus in anger spake:

"Traitress, why art thou here? Comest thou to plead
For him, who, thirsting for his monarch's blood,
Is leagued with Israel's foes? Hie to the camp
Of Achish, and behold in foul revolt
The son of Jesse, glut thy raptured eyes
Upon the ravage of thy native fields,
And bid the hosts of Gath, and Ashkelon,
Rush to the carnage of thy father's house;
And when the name of Saul is heard no more,—
When thou to hopeless exile shalt be dragged,
Then let the thought of that perfidious night,

When thou from Gibeah sent'st my mortal foe,
Console thy heart. Yet, no, destroyer, no.
Though every arm in yonder host could wield
A spear like that, the great Goliah bore,
And though their armies like the sands were spread,
That bound the briny world, I still would tear
The rebel forth. Look to the princess, guards!
Unto my palace let her hie with speed;
And there wear out the time in penitence,
Or fruitless rage, till war shall be no more;
And woe to him, by whom she thence shall 'scape
To hatch new treasons for our vexed state."

Frowning, he ceased; when prostrate at his feet
The beauteous Michal fell, and speechless sobs
Expressed alone the agony which thus
At length in broken words burst forth:

"O Sire!
Reproach not thus. Crush not a wounded heart.
If I have erred in ought, and if the years
(In which that awful front hath still been turned
On me in wrath, till I to loneliness
Have fled, and wept, till night in sleep hath sealed

Each eye save mine,) suffice not, be my doom
Here by thyself pronounced, and let me die
(As Jephtha's daughter died) beneath the hand
That gave me life, and with my parting breath
I'll bless my father. Yet when Michal's voice
(That once could charm thy darkest mood) is hushed,—
When in the dust this hand is laid, that oft
Hath cooled thy brow, when red from victory
Thou hast returned; then, as thy memory haunts
The still receding past, O let one sigh
Break on thy heart for me!"

She added not,
But from her eyes there gushed a briny tide,
That like the drops from precious balm distilled,
Fell like the soul of grief. The hue of wrath
No longer burnt upon the monarch's cheek;
He raised his daughter, and with waving hand,
Signed each attendant from the royal tent;
Then in his arms he strained his trembling child,
Whilst from his brain (that long had tearless throbbed)
The torrent burst. As, (when on some dark steep,
The genial breeze from southern climes exhaled
Dissolves the chain that binds the pendent floods

In icy sleep,) at once the stream descends;
And thus the monarch spake:

"Thrice welcome hour,
Which from this bosom lifts the weight of years!
Thrice duteous daughter of a sire unblessed;
Sweet plant whose gentle clasp hath sheltered still
This heaven struck ruin. O forgive the hand
That would have torn thee hence! Oh! couldst thou know
The matchless woes that rend thy father's heart,
The hideous maze of thought, that coil on coil
This labouring soul is doomed to track in vain,
Unguided, unconsoled; and could thy sense
Pierce to the untold horror of remorse,
Thou wouldst forgive."

To whom thus she: "Ah! cease
To torture thus. Forgive thee, Sire! from whom
This bosom caught the throb of life, whose arms
Have shielded still, my infant steps? Forgive?
May Heaven in wrath convert my words to fire
And drive the scorching vapour to my heart,
If I say falsely, that I love the spot

On which that eye majestic hath but looked.
Let others wait to hail from victory
The mighty Saul, with timbrel and with song;
Be it my nobler part to trace thy way
Upon the battle-field. What means that sigh?
What though yon Godless host bestrew the plain,
Thick as the ruins of the fading year
When Autumn tempests sweep the moaning shade?
Ask of Philistia's widows, and her sires
Made childless by the swords of Israel,—
Ask of the carrion bird, with ravine gorged,
Till from the dire repast the labouring wing
Scarce bore him to his crag; have we not slain
Till every arm was weak, and victory
Hath panted self-oppressed? Is not thy shout
Of onset, as a strain, to which the song
Of triumph is the echo? And thy front
The exhaustless fountain of high hope, from whence
Each wearied breast immortal vigour draws?"

To whom the king: "Daughter, thy soothing words,
Are like the gale, which from his native clime,
O'er plain or ocean wafted, cools the brow
Of the lone exile, whose oppressèd heart

Feels not the touch of hope. So from the past,
The distant past, thy accents seem to come.
O Michal, I am exiled from myself,
My former self, 'twixt which, and this dark hour
There yawns a gulf perturbed, of wrathful deeds
And thoughts of madness, and soul-shaking fears,
And joyless days, and nights by sleep unblessed,
Or tossed by unknown terror, when that power
Which rules in slumber, from the wrecks of things,
Or from the unformed future, hath called forth
His ghastly and abortive forms. And still
From the far past, that warning voice is breathed
As when it first was heard on Gilgal's plain,
Whilst yet our altar smoked with sacrifice :
'Thy kingdom shall not stand;' and since these words
Fell like a mildew on my blasted soul,
O, I am faded, changed, and even now
Perchance in yonder host the bow is braced
Which to my breast shall urge the deathful shaft."

To whom thus Michal (in deep grief) replied :
"O Sire, it shall not be: Thou shalt not fall.
I do remember when, in happier days,
Once by thy side I stood, and marked a storm

That raged above, when sudden through the veil
That o'er our skies was cast, the day looked forth
And from that gloom and sunlight, sprang the bow
Whose brilliant shape self-poised in ether hung,
Amazed I stood, and with my infant gaze
In silence marked its growing fires. ‘ Lo, there
My child,’ thou saidst, ‘ the token shines
Which (when the relics of a world o'erthrown
With steps scarce re-assured first printed earth)
Bestrod the heaven, to trembling mortals sent
In sign that mercy ever lives on high.’
What though with rites undue our altars reeked;
Was thy repentance spurned? Didst thou not crush
Philistia's force? Hast thou not still prevailed
Against our foes?”

To whom the monarch thus:
“ Michal, thou know'st not all. The sacred light
Of Urim gleams no more. Our seers are mute;
Nor dream, nor waking trance declares the will
Of the Eternal One; and yesternight
Methought I wandered where at Ramah lies
Elkanah's heaven-taught son; when from the tomb,
Sudden he started, whom our tribes have wrapped

In funeral odours. Pale beneath the moon
His features gleamed, his brow in wrath was bent
On me, as when he chid for Amalek
Not wholly slaughtered, yet he silent stood,
When sudden from the ground methought there rose
The cry that wails the dead, and in that strain
Thy father's name was mixed, and then the form
Of Samuel sank, and all things were confused,
And times gone by upon my slumbering sense
Were crowded thick, till daylight came at last
And broke the fetters of that hideous sleep."

Then thus the Princess: "Think no more of this,
I do intreat thee, Sire. The brain o'erwrought
By things that touch our waking hours with joy
Or woe, reposes not when slumber chains
Each sense; but as the thunder-peal which breaks
Amid some mountain range, o'er crag and glen
Is flung by echo wild, so when we sleep,
Each stronger impulse from the world without
Through mazy fancy vibrates. Dreams are but
Thoughts unconstrained by reason, images
Of shade and substance mingled, skeletons
Of truth in falsehood clad: nor hope nor fear

Should gather light or darkness from the hues
Of those wild pictures. But in Israel!
O! there is one whose very self is truth:
Who ever leant upon that arm and fell?
Ask of the ages past (since that dread hour
When our great leader heard on Sinai's top
Jehovah's self proclaimed all merciful,)
When was repentance vain? The fragrant smoke
Of incense flies not to the azure vault
More surely than the lonely prayer to him
Who sits between the Cherubims. Thus hope
May spring from gushing tears, as lilies rise
Amid the stream. What though Heaven veils in wrath
The gracious light that on the future shines
For Israel? Trust we, pray we still. Protract
The war with distant skirmish, shun the fight;
Let each strip off his ornaments of pride,
As did our fathers in the wilderness
What time the accursed calf was formed, and bid
The universal cry for mercy rise
Throughout our suppliant tribes, and I, who ne'er
Have felt the rapture of prophetic trance,
Already see yon mighty army stretched
Helpless, and tombless, on the silent plain."

To whom the Hebrew king: "May it be so!
Thy words, my child, are like the murmur poured
From some cold fountain on his ear, who treads
The waste with fainting step. But yet 'tis known
That Jesse's son is with Philistia ranged,
And that all-conquering arm, that man of might,
Who 'mid the shock of battle walks unharmed,
Adds tenfold courage to the hostile camp."

Then Michal thus: "Why this is strange, that he,
Who, when thou sought'st his life, did twice behold
Thy rest unguarded, yet forbore to slay;
That he whose potent string alone hath chased
That unknown power which o'er thy aching breast
Oft works with darkest influence; should now
In foul revolt against his country rise.
If it be so, though words of more than love
Have bound my destiny to Jesse's son,
I swear to rend his image from my heart,
And cast it to forgetfulness. But no,
Thou art deceived, and David is not false;
Either he follows not the king of Gath,
(For treachery is reckless in its speech,)
Or if, indeed, he walks in yonder camp,

'Tis with design to succour, not confound,
Our tribes. If then thy daughter may prevail,
Let one of strong fidelity be sent
At even to the uncircumcisèd host,
As if with terms of peace, and let him there
As best occasion serves, seek out the shepherd,
And in secret say, 'Thy deeds are known,
Thy project to thy monarch is revealed.'
And as he whispers thus, let him mark well
What changes o'er the son of Jesse pass;
For, as I stand this day in sight of Heaven,
Those doubtful words will brighten or obscure
His brow with joy, or fear, as truth or fraud
Reigns in his heart. But be this purpose hid
From all, and chiefly from the Edomite,
Who ever (since that day when David first
From Gibeah fled) hath been his enemy.
Thus only may we know if that dark tale,
Which thou hast heard of him, (who once was dear
To Israel's king,) be true or false."

She spake,
And after pause of thought, the son of Kish
Replied:

"Thou reason'st well, thou calm'st my breast,
O! Michal, could I from the guilty past
Efface but one dark hour, one fleeting hour,
All might be peace within me: but nor earth,
Nor sea, nor all-pervading air supplies
A drug, or soothing breath to charm remorse.
Were not our priests by me in Gibeah slain?
And can I think the God of Abraham
Will bless the arm by whom that blood was spilt?"

To whom the princess: "Sire, it may be thus—
Since thus He hath ordained, who only views
The essences of things without a veil.
'Tis mercy's sweet behest, that penitence
Shall cancel sin, and by that healing power
(More sweet than ever gum from Saba's groves
Was wept,) the aching bosom shall be lulled
To truest peace. Let but my counsels sway
Thy breast; renounce at once their baleful words,
From whose contagion envy springs; call back
The thoughts that in thy heart arose, when erst
The son of Jesse from the rock did chide
The slumbering Abner, ere he did restore
Thy spear and water-cruise; believe him true

Who never did thee wrong; send Doeg hence
Unto his herds; let valiant Jonathan
Each secret purpose share; trust but in Him
Whose aid is victory; and all shall yet
Be well."

As thus she spake, the brow of Saul
Grew bright with long-forgotten hope. "Thy words
Are just," (he said) "and in my heart awakes
A joy unfelt for many a rolling year,
All shall be done—but see, the sun is high.
Haste to thy brother Jonathan, and bid
Him hither speed; amuse the vulgar ear
With unimportant words as thus; 'The fit
Is passed: the King is well, and other plans
For prompt annoyance of the foe revolves;'
But in thy soul repress thy brightest thoughts,
Like some cold streamlet whose untainted dew
And gentle music in the rock are hid
That guards its sunless birth."

He ceased, and straight
With eager footstep Michal passed, to where
The princes' tents were spread abroad, when lo,

One of their train encountered her, all armed
As issuing to the battle-plain, from whom,
She of her royal brothers tidings sought,
When thus with low obeisance he spake :

"Daughter of Israel's majesty, the voice
Of glory summons still our princes forth.
I haste to join the valiant Jonathan,
Who, with our seer, confers without the camp ;
For ere he rushes to the field of fight
It is his wont to ask the aid of Heaven."

Then Michal : "Warrior, speed thee to him ; say,
It is our king's command that he repair
Unto his presence to receive his will
Touching the farther conduct of the war.
Tell him that when the conference is o'er,
The princess Michal, ere again he dares
The battle, craves a moment of his speech."

While thus she spake, the Edomite, who, since
The hour when Israel's priests were stretched in death,
Had swayed with thraldom absolute the breast
Of Saul, was tossed by thoughts more furious far

Than ever waves upon the Atlantic deep
Or on that other briny waste, which lies
Stretched out from Asia's to Columbia's shore
By wildest blast were waked. With gnashing teeth
He marked the Princess whilst her gentle words
With long-forgotten spell, controlled the wrath
Of Israel's monarch, and withdrew in rage
To watch from far the moment, when once more
Upon his solitude he yet might steal
And in his bosom fix his baleful power.
He saw when Michal toward the Prince's tents
Had passed, and in the joy her features bore,
Beheld his hope o'erthrown, unless some deed
Of boldest perfidy might yet prevail
Against the words of truth, and thus in thought
He chafed.

"And have I slept, and must I fall
Before a woman's breath? Where is my dream
Of glory? Have I checked in vain the pride
Of Jesse's matchless son, and bent the brow
Of Saul upon his children? Hath his rage
Polluted Israel's land with sacred blood
Till Samuel's silent voice no more revealed

The future, and the state with faction sick,
Hath challenged my ambition? Have I trod
So long my upward path through strife and fraud,
To fail so poorly now? Doeg, awake!
Be but thyself, this hour the King's alone,
Speed to his solitude, arouse once more
His envy and his fear, and rend the web
As yet but thinly twined, whose growing toils
May else o'erwhelm thy power."

By such resolves
Impelled, he sought the tent of Saul, whose ear
Still with the gentle words of Michal, seemed
To hold sweet converse; when the Edomite,
With mien abashed, and low obeisance,
Before him stood, to whom the monarch thus:

"Doeg, thou com'st uncalled, but it is well.
Thanks for thy service of the night, that deed
Shall be with shekels of pure silver paid,
But for my order touching Jesse's son,
I do repeal it, stay thou in the camp
Till counsel shall mature our purposes.

The fit hath left me weak, I would repose;
Ere sunset thou shalt learn my farther will."

Then Doeg: "Hear me, King; for though the wrath
Of princes, shivers like the lightning flash,
Still should the faithful breast that guards them, dare,
E'en to provoke his doom, by words of truth,
When guilty falsehood might conceal the storm
That o'er the monarch lours. King, I have viewed
Those features long, have marked when grief or joy
Hath darkened or illumed that brow on which,
All that in man shines brightest is transfused;
Nor o'er the living tablet of that face
Can pass one fleeting change, (the lightest tint
That shades that mirror of thy soul,) but tells
To me the secret thought that gave it birth.
And now beneath a fixèd smile, I read
That which might make me tremble, could he fear,
Who still hath mocked at peril, to preserve
His faith inviolate. Some unknown hand
Hath thrust me from thy favour; be it so:
Yet ere thou speak my doom, say, have the lips
(Whose words bear rule within thy bosom) told
The secret that involves thy fate, the wave

That from the future even now upheaved,
Rolls on, swift, black, resistless, if some power
Check not its course? Then trust them still; if not,
Then by that awful front I swear, on which
These eyes are bent, that though they were thy sons
Who slander me, they are less fit than I
To guard thy sacred head. Pause ere thou speak:
Let truth, not passion, sway thee, for the day
Fades not in night more surely, than thy words
Draw after them thy triumph or thy fall."

To whom thus Saul unmoved: "A secret ill
Hath been to me revealed, a root of woe,
Whose fibres suck their baleful nutriment
From malice, till the light of reason blights
The envenomed plant, and from its clasp sets free
The labouring bosom. Edomite, thou know'st
The rest; withdraw, nor press my silence more."

To whom thus Doeg: "Son of Kish, farewell:
I wait no second bidding. But when fire,
And strained bows, and flashing blades shall gird
Thy tents in slumber wrapped, then let my words
Awaken in thy heart a vain regret

That thou hast deemed me false. I stay not here
To fall with those whom counsel could not save;
Each hour too swiftly flies, that finds me thus
Within destruction's grasp. The air, methinks,
Grows chill and black around me, as if fanned
By wings of vultures numberless, that rush
To banquet on our tribes. If thou art wise,
Let not thy sword be sheathed, nor be thy bow
For one short hour unbraced. Shake off the weight,
The balmy weight of sleep; yet all is vain.
Once more, devoted Prince, farewell."

He ceased,
And o'er the mind of Saul, there crept a frost
Of dark suspicion, mixed with fear, that struck
Deep to the root, those gentler thoughts that late
Had in his bosom kindled. So, when earth
First feels the glow of vernal suns, oft wakes
A chilling haze from some dire compound breathed
Of elements malign, beneath whose breath
The mystic spring of vegetable life
Grows black and motionless. His lifted hand
Forbad the absence of the Edomite,
While swift as clouds along an April sky

Are borne, unnumbered doubts and fears oppressed
His heart. Now Michal's words awoke the thrill
Of feelings long departed, now the voice
Of perfidy prevailed, till thus at length,
Half hidden, half expressed, his thoughts broke forth.

"If it be so, then reason is man's fool,
And that bright ray, which mortals fondly deem
The quenchless beacon of our steps, (when lost
In this perplexèd wilderness of things,)
Is but a light, which they who wield, may plant
Where most the fens of error stretch unseen,
And lure to swift destruction, him who trusts
The fatal radiance. Yet she reasoned well,
Can he betray who saves his foe? or he
Whose hands with guiltless blood are stained, be true?
But hold! who argues thus? O, had her lips
By David's ne'er been pressed! but love, strong love,
Breeds doubt of faithfulness to him, who still
Hath tracked a husband's life; and thus my hope
Must famish. Doeg, speak. What secret dire
Thus threats our state with woe? Whate'er the words,
I will with calmness hear, and lock them deep
In silence, else may they whom most I dread
Behold the shame of Saul."

To whom with joy
Like that the serpent feels, when toward his prey
Through some entangled brake he viewless glides,
The Edomite replied: "Monarch, but that
I prize his love who once believed me true,
Though half thy kingdom for my tale were pledged,
And though my silence were to torture doomed,
Thou wouldst command in vain; but now attend.
Scarce had I left thy tent and sought the plain,
When one of yonder camp, (who for some slight
Received from Achish, doth to me disclose
The councils of the king of Gath,) disguised
In Hebrew garb, upon my solitude
With stealthy footstep came, and in a voice
Low as the whisper of the weary gale,
Heard from the palm-tree's top at sultry noon,
Thus breathed his story: 'Doeg, seek thy king,
Tell him our monarch, at the dead of night,
Doth purpose an assault. The Hebrew guest,
By whom Goliah fell, will guide our march;
Nor on his valour, more than on the aid
Of some within thy camp, doth he rely.
Scorn not my tidings, for when treachery
With force is leagued, fear's self may be too bold.'

He spake and fled. But hear me farther, King.
Perchance thou doubtest yet, for well I know,
How dark suspicion, (like the moss which clothes
Some aged tree,) on slightest nutriment
Can vegetate, and o'er the noblest heart,
Spread with insidious growth. If it be thus
With thee, let one in whom thou dost confide,
Seek the Philistine host, and be it mine
To guide him to *his* presence, who first told
This fearful secret. Jonathan himself,
(The prince whose virtue Israel most reveres,)
May execute this service, as if sent
With embassy of peace, and thy great son
Shall say that Doeg hath been faithful found,
And hush the voice of malice. King, the hour
Cries haste! swift deeds swift ruin must prevent."

To whom, with dark'ning brow, the son of Kish:
"Now, by my life, this David doth involve
His steps in night. Doeg, my heart is thine,
Ere sunset, thou shalt hie to yonder camp
And, for that Jonathan still claims some share
In each adventurous deed, 'tis fit that he
Aid in this feigned embassy. But first,

Let a selected band with speed convey
The Princess, Michal, from a field, o'er which
Each hour may pour destruction, let her know
The danger that demands her instant flight;
But say, withal, her will shall be obeyed.
And for this shepherd, (who so boldly plants
His trait'rous footstep on the neck of kings,)
May he not feel our vengeance, ere the bud
Of treachery shall burst? Doeg, his life—
His life doth breathe contagion on our state.
Is he not mortal? Might not sudden act
For ever lull the sleepless ache, that preys
On my afflicted breast? Art thou not brave
And faithful to thy king? Thou know'st my will;
Beware of Jonathan, upon whose soul,
The fascination of this serpent's gaze
Is all too strongly fixed, for he (be sure)
Will strive, for the undoing of our house."

To whom the Edomite: "Monarch, this care
Be mine. Farewell; and though the foe of Saul
In darkness, or in mail of ten-fold steel,
Should wrap his form, he shall deride no more
The stay of Israel's tribes."

He ceased and straight
Rushed to his task of fraud.

Meanwhile with hope
Elate, the princess Michal scarce endured
The lingering hours: from her pavilion, oft
She scanned the camp, and still her famished gaze
Did multiply the form of him she sought,
In many a warrior's front; and still the sigh
Broke forth, as oft in chilling vacancy
Young expectation died. But lo, he comes
With swiftest step, an Israelite in arms.
Can it be *he?* The words of joy are on
Her trembling lips. But no, upon that face,
Her father's matchless image, is not stampt.
Still he approached, and now the messenger
Was known, whom to the field she late had sent,
To call the valiant Jonathan, and thus
With low obeisance he spake:

"Princess
To execute thy will, my eager thought
Did scarce outstrip my speed; yet all was vain,
Our peerless prince, unable to endure

A short delay, had mingled in the fight,
Where hottest skirmish raged. I sought him long;
But who his lightning course may hope to trace
On yonder far-stretched field, where foaming steeds,
And rushing cars, and men of matchless might,
Commix the storm of war? Yet ere I came
To say how I had sped, I did command
One whom suspicion's self might trust, to seek
The son of Saul; and where the plain was strown
With fierce Philistia's bands, his steps he turned,
For slaughtered foes best shew the path by which
Our prince hath trod. I stay upon thy word."

Then Michal. "Haste thee to the field again,
And track with ceaseless diligence the steps
Of Jonathan, and large reward be sure
Shall recompense thy toil."

He heard, and where
The scattered war yet raged, hied him with speed.
Meanwhile, as one who, (in some forest lost
Where Afric's wilds are spread,) benighted stands,
Whilst to his heart, the joyless symphony,
Poured through the moving wilderness of shade,

Whispers of unseen peril, so the breast
Of Michal laboured with a dread of ills
Unknown, as thus she mused:

"O Jonathan,
To-day thy courage may undo thy land.
Hadst thou but paused this once!—What's to be done?
If on my father's solitude should steal
He whom I dare not name, all may be lost.
Heaven render vain the thought of fear that loads
My bosom! Haste, too valiant brother, haste,
For guilt is swift."

Thus by suspicion urged,
She sought the tent of Israel's king, when lo
One armed as if for instant conflict came
To meet her onward steps, his face perturbed
As by some danger imminent, and thus
He spake:

"Princess, I am of those
Who in the presence of our monarch stand.
The words I speak are his. Alarm, till now
Unknown, hath spread, of foul conspiracy

With foemen leagued. Each moment fraught with
death,
Demands thy instant flight. A messenger
From Jonathan, confirms each dark surmise.
The king in secret consultation sits,
And I may not delay to marshal forth
The band that shall to Gallim guard thy path.
Withal, thy sire did bid me say thy will
Touching the matter of your conference
Shall be obeyed."

Then Michal. "Gracious Heaven!
The king in danger? Ere I quit the camp
May I not snatch perhaps a last embrace?
My brother Jonathan confirm surmise
Of foul conspiracy? From whom? Who dares?
Thy words have waked a fever in my brain,
Which words alone may cool. Speak, speak, but no,
I'll to the king."

To whom the messenger:
"Princess, it must not be. The strict command
Of Saul doth urge thy instant going hence;
The very air is rank with treason's breath,

E'en thus, we stay too long, a trumpet's blast
Will call a reinforcement to the field;
If when that sound shall cease, thy tread is heard
Within the camp, my life must answer it.
Nay, weep not, princess, all shall yet be well,
Conspiracy perceived, is half o'erthrown,
Away, away, the guards our steps attend."

He said, and Michal, by a maze of fear,
And ruined hopes, perplexed, obeyed in grief,
What seemed a father's will. Her female train
She summoned forth, and with prophetic sigh,
(Too sadly echoed in the coming hour
By Israel's tribes,) to Gallim bent her way.

END OF BOOK II.

THE

FALL OF SAÜL.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Apostrophe to the light of Revelation — Return to the subject— Evening drawing on, Achish, the son of Maoch, and king of Gath, bids the several chiefs of the Philistines who return with the skirmishing parties, prepare supper — Albrok, an Arab, principal partizan of Doeg the Edomite, comes to the Philistine camp, and discloses to Achish the projected embassy from the Israelites, promising thereby (on the part of Doeg,) to deliver Jonathan to the Philistines—Achish agrees, and appoints a place where the embassy shall be surprised by an ambush—Albrok returns to Doeg, who meets him on the plain, and after a conference, goes alone to the Hebrew camp—his reflections, which develop his treacherous plan, and in particular, the envy, and mistrust, which he had excited in the Philistines against David —An apostrophe to Divine prescience—Jonathan, who had not returned to the camp, since he left it in the morning to skirmish, (ignorant of the intended embassy to the Philistines,) sets out in the direction of the foe, resolved, if possible, to obtain an interview with David — His course, and their meeting, are described — In the conference, David explains with what intent he had followed the Philistines to the war, and concerts a plan of operation for the approaching battle—Abner, who had been sent by Saul to seek Jonathan, comes suddenly to him— Describes the anxiety of Saul for his son, and ends the discourse of Jonathan and David, who return to the Hebrews, and Philistines, respectively — In the meantime, Doeg having in vain sought for Jonathan, who was to lead the projected embassy to the Philistines, is in great perplexity at the prolonged absence of the prince—Sun-set draws on—The dismay of the Hebrew camp is described—Saul assembles the chiefs in his tent—deplores the absence of his son, and encourages each, to give his opinion on that emergency — Abner and Doeg give opposite counsel — Phalti, the son of Laish, with great wrath supports the latter — Abner maintains his opinion with indignation — Ishui, second son of Saul, gives orders, to disarm Abner—Great

confusion ensues, which is appeased by Saul, who orders Abner to seek Jonathan in the field, and despatches Doeg to the Philistine camp, in case Jonathan should be detained there—The council dissolves—Doeg leaves the Hebrew camp and encounters Albrok, who tells him that the ambush had in vain awaited the embassy from Saul, and that the Philistines began to call in question the fidelity of Doeg—The Edomite, and Albrok, encourage each other, and the latter goes to bid the ambuscade from the field, whilst the former seeks the Philistine camp, where he is met by Malchis, chief officer in the army of Achish—Malchis reproaches Doeg because the ambush had been set in vain — Doeg excuses himself, charging the failure of the project on the Philistines, who had permitted David to accompany them to the war—Malchis is appeased, and promises to get David dismissed—Doeg discloses the intention of Saul, to consult a witch, as to the event of the war, and advises Malchis, to get the battle deferred, till he should hear her answer, which Doeg promises to reveal — Malchis repairs to Achish, then in council and describes to the Philistine chiefs the danger to be apprehended from David, declaring his resolution to return to Ashkelon, unless they dismiss the Hebrews—The chiefs are won by his speech, and unanimously swear that David and his men shall depart from the camp before morning.

This Book occupies the latter part of the first day, and great part of the second night—The scene is sometimes in the Hebrew, sometimes in the Philistine camp, and sometimes in the open plain.

BOOK III.

HAIL! sacred beam, that ('midst a world o'erthrown
In woe and gloom, up shot from the profound
Of truth eternal) o'er the chosen race
Diffused a light to which, the utmost lore
Of India's orient clime, or of that land
(Stretched southward from the sea by Nilus' stream)
Was darkness infinite. O day! O night
Of glory! when Jehovah, girt in cloud
And fire, first led his host unmatched in might,
Whilst in obedience and high faith they stood.
Then, after silence long, (Celestial King!)
Thy voice was heard, (or from the moving cloud,
Or Sinai's top, or from thy curtained shrine,)
That in the far-spread desert, and more late
'Mid Palestina's palms, sustained and taught

With power and light, the tribes of Israel,
And showed on earth the majesty of Heaven.

Yet foul revolt from him who blessed and saved,
Far more than Egypt's might, or Anak's sons
Of giant stature, could avail to stain
The glories of the self-afflicted seed.
O, who for that first monarch would not weep,
(As wept Elkanah's son,) who stood so high
And trod to dust the foes of Israel,
Till with Omnipotence he strove; then fell?
The beauteous among thousands, he whose breast
Had felt the impulse of Divinity,
By powers malignant tossed, disclaimed of Heaven,
From gulph to gulph, rushed headlong, self undone.

But to my theme. The hour of noon was passed,
And on the plain the scattered fight grew faint;
Whilst panting steeds, and cars with dust and gore
Defiled, and quivers that resounded not
With their imprisoned storm, and bows unbraced
Or vainly bent, (emblems of powerless rage,)
And carnage-blunted brands, and men alike
By triumph or defeat, oppressed, declared
How well that day the work of death had sped.

The son of Maoch 'midst his warriors stood,
Glutting his eyes with many a trophy, reft
From Israel's hated tribes, whilst round the camp,
Unnumbered bleatings spread the tale of spoil
To Palestina's echoes. One by one,
The chiefs who lingered most where skirmish raged,
Pressed to the king of Gath, who bade prepare
The evening meal, when one in Arab garb,
Sudden approached, and through the yielding crowd,
Swift to the monarch hied. Yet after act
Of reverence, he spake not, but his eye
(That scanned each chieftain) held discourse, to which
Thus Achish:

"Albrok, speak. The Hebrew chief
Whom thy suspicion wrongs, yet treads the field
Of war, from whence he latest still returns.
What tidings bring'st thou from the Edomite?"

To whom, with utterance low, in Arab speech
Thus Albrok: "Peace be on thee, King! He whom
I serve, (whilst yet the circling shadows fell
Scarce westward of where now they lie,) thus spake.
'Haste, Albrok, to yon camp: say to the King

Who leads Philistia's bands, that ere the set
Of sun, the eldest born of Saul, (the prince
Who most sustains the hope of Israel,)
Shall be by Doeg to his power consigned.
As tho' with embassy of peace he seeks
Philistia's host, but all is false; a spy
He comes, by me the secret fraud is tracked.
Let not brave Achish waste the favouring hour
In doubt or fear; No God protects the steps
Of perfidy."

He ceased, and o'er the front
Of Achish, passed the flash of hope, but dimmed,
Whilst yet scarce kindled, by the thought that told
How dark the cloud that veils from human eyes
The nearest instant of futurity.
He paused, and for a moment on the few
Who knew that Arab speech, his eye he turned,
And on each warrior brow, beheld high hope
Of instant triumph stamped. Then thus bespake
The messenger.

"By Dagon! this is well
If we but speed. Return to Doeg straight;

Tell him, he shall be met by men of trust
Ere he can reach our tents. 'Twixt Gilboa's hill
And us, there is, thou know'st, a place most fit
For ambush, there will we our forces plant;
Let swiftness still on secrecy attend,
Fear not the Hebrew band, my will directs
Their steps, the rest is victory."

He said,
And Albrok answered not, but toward the camp
Of Israel returned. Meanwhile the day
O'er Asia's clime decayed, the languid air
Scarce printed with its tread the forest's gloom,
Or Ocean's wave, or river's reedy shore:
The shout of war was hushed, and in its stead
The flapping wing and famished cry proclaimed
The banquet dire that man of man had spread
For beast and vulture. To the Hebrew tents,
(After short speech with Albrok,) Doeg sped
Along the lonely plain, and at his side,
Clad in the summer gale, the foe of man,
(That power malign that o'er the breast of Saul
By Heaven's high sufferance wrought with influence
dire,)
Moved viewless.

Spirits, speak but to our thoughts;
And in the hues or sounds of grosser things
Their subtle essence folding, through our sense
Glide to their kindred nature, and within
This dark organic veil their secrets breathe;
And hence (if of such mysteries the rhyme
Of mortal, may essay development,
Unblamed,) the lightest pulse that beats throughout
These elements, may to the world unseen
Our being bind for good or ill. And now
The grand deceiver poured through Doeg's breast
His dark suggestions, which to thoughts like these
Gave birth.

"All is achieved. Yon sun sets not
Ere Jonathan, (the prince who still hath crossed
My purposes,) shall be to death consigned.
For not Arabia's gold, (though piled in heaps
That might o'ertop the mountains, and o'erwhelm
The day-star's burning eye with his own light
Flung from their flashing sides,) nor all the gums
By Saba's forests wept, (though heaped on high
Till whirlwinds sweeping o'er those hills, should sink
Oppressed to calm beneath their odorous load;)

Shall from Philistia buy the son of Saul;
In such a web of fear will I involve
The soul of Achish. Yet he shall deceive
With hope the Hebrew monarch, and suspend
Destruction o'er the prince, till for his sake,
The son of Kish to each command of pride
Shall yield, and casting off what yet of strength
Remains to his distracted state, shall fall,
Philistia's prey and mine. Nor shall the son
Of Jesse banquet on my toils; for him
A snare is twined. Already (moved by me,)
Philistia's lords detest the Hebrew chief:
Full well I know his purpose to defend
The tribes by force or fraud, but all is vain;
Ere morn, he quits the uncircumcisèd host,
Or envy hath no power on mortal hearts.
The son of Maoch by his gods hath sworn
That I, for aid, which I alone can give,
Shall rule for him the land of Israel.
Nor power of earth, nor ought which dreamers feign
Of force invisible, shall stay my course.
Fly, lingering hours, and quench the twofold thirst
Of vengeance and ambition, which consumes
My burning heart: I come, proud son of Saul,

To call thee to thy grave. Where is thy scorn
Of Doeg now? Thy oft-repeated vaunt
That more than human strength sustained thy tribes,
Where is it now? Thy seers, (before whose glance
The future lies revealed,) why warn they not
Their prince of coming woe? Have the fierce fires
That glare from Shunem's plain, scorched up their
souls?"

'Twas thus in impious mood, the Edomite
Mused, reckless of the Power, whose will supreme,
From good or evil, weaves the chain of things:
And through high prescience, stretched from age to age,
Far as eternity, (viewing the deeds
Of natures yet uncalled from nothingness,)
Compounds the issues of free purposes
Into itself, and from each intellect,
That in allegiance to its Maker stands,
Or strives in vain revolt, still draws the work
Of wisdom infinite. Thus liberty
With order blends, on the abuser's head
Alone, recoiling, whilst the ceaseless stream
Of things pre-imaged in the Eternal Mind
Rolls on immense; worlds born, decaying, crushed,

With all their load of mysteries, (their wrecks
The seed of other worlds,) nor might the strength
Of all created powers, (though leagued in war
Against the matchless king,) a moment check
The everlasting tide, more than the starts
Of weakest thing that cleaves the watery world,
Avail to change the stream of the salt sea.
But of such things, naught recked the Edomite,
Nor deemed himself the instrument of force
Unseen, as o'er the solitary field
He passed.

Meanwhile the son of Saul, (preserved
By Heaven's decree, from death inglorious,
Though doomed on Gilboa's heights to fall,) had left
The faithful band that in the field of strife
Still made his path their own, and (urged by thoughts
Of him with whom his inmost soul communed
Present or absent,) trod the downward way
From Israel's camp, and on his devious course,
(Shunning the open plain,) through many a path
Of loneliness and shadow, unprofaned
By foeman's footstep, hied him toward the rear
Of the uncircumcised, where Jesse's son

Lay with his warriors. Round the Hebrew prince,
(Ere half his course was done,) the fading light
With darkness mingled, nor misled his steps
From boyhood skilled in that perplexed way.

O how unlike that hour to the bright days,
When his light tread first tracked those brakes, to rouse
The bounding deer, or (in communion lost
With nature) catch from each expanding flower,
Or broidered leaf, or insect's wildest wing,
Or cry of beast or fowl, or sky or flood,
The rapturous secrets of the universe!
Then, (like some torrent heard on mountain steep,
Fresh broken into day, from purest snows
And gleaming crystal,) flowed his youthful life,
Whilst yet around his sire, Jehovah's smile
Shone like the emerald bow, by him beheld
To whom the Apocalypse unveiled the throne
Of Him, who lives for ever. Now how changed
Was all within! How, on his sickening heart,
The ban of Heaven, against his house pronounced,
Hung like a gathering storm, which almost mocked
His better peace!

But hark, what tread is that?
Scarce to be caught amid the rustling leaves,
So stealthy was that foot? He paused. Again
It sounds, and nearer, and his practised ear
Hath caught the clank of arrows, and half hid
Beneath that twilight shade, what seemed the shape
Of man, so without motion moved, that scarce
A trembling spray revealed his path. As glides
A leaf, upon some languid river borne
Through tangled woods, so came that form.

"Ho! stand.
Doth Saul or Achish thy allegiance claim?
Speak suddenly. A shaft already strives
To quit the string of an unerring bow."

So spake the Hebrew prince, when from the shade
A cry of joy broke forth, as he by whom
Goliah's force was quelled, upon the neck
Of Jonathan fell weeping.

"Hail, sweet prince,"
(At length he whispered:) "Heaven hath heard my prayer,

And ere we mingle in to-morrow's fight,
We meet once more. O, Jonathan! a load
Is taken from my heart, and years of woe
(Like a distempered dream) are swept away
Before thy presence. O, upon that brow
E'en by this faded light I see the taint
Of care. Most noble prince, be comforted.
Nay, weep not, as our monarch's sacred name
Bursts from thy lips; I read thy thoughts, but all
Shall yet be well. The uncircumcisèd host
May fill (as it hath oft-times filled) the maw
Of Israel's vultures. There is mercy yet
On high, Jehovah may but prove, if still
We trust in him; and his anointed one
(Whose sword hath made such havoc in the sons
Of Gath and Ashkelon) shall look them pale
To-morrow. From thy bow, no arrow flies
But drinks a foeman's life; for He, the help
Of Israel, nerves thine arm, and in thy soul
Wakes force ineffable. Was not that day
A day of fear, when (as Philistia's bands
At Michmash lay encamped) Elkanah's son
Did chide our monarch in Jehovah's name,
For rites too hastily performed? Who then,

(What time the seer in sorrow turned away,
And our deserted king in Migron stood,)
Enlightened Israel's eyes? Was it not thou?
Didst thou not trust in Heaven? And by thy hand
Fell not the garrison? Be strong, my prince.
Are not my steps within the hostile camp,
With twice three hundred practised warriors?
Full well I know, the king of Gath reserves
For me, the place of danger and of trust,
Where in the foremost fight he leads the war.
There, when the battle hottest burns, direct
Thy onset with a chosen band; our part
Shall be to spread confusion through the ranks
Of the uncircumcised, and if the hope
Of Israel bless, we triumph. Prince, thou know'st
The plan which (as God liveth before whom
I stand) first led me to the foeman's tents:
And to reveal it, came I thus, resolved,
E'en in the camp of Saul, to track thee out,
And pour my secret on thy lonely ear.
And O my prince! if at Engedi's cave,
Or at Hachilah, David hath been found
True to thy house, then, by that hour when first
Our natures felt the thrill of sympathy,

(What time beneath my arm the giant fell,)
Doubt not my tale; or take again this bow
And gird thee with this belt, which at that hour
Thou gavest. Be the words at Ezel's stone
Pronounced, as they had ne'er been breathed, and from
This bosom take the load of life."

"Peace, peace,
O son of Jesse, would'st thou tear a heart,
Already racked with pain thou canst not know?
Why, shepherd, though I saw thee rush in arms
Upon our tribes, I would not think thee false,
But deem my sense a traitor. Waste we not
This fleeting moment, for my boding soul
Looks not beyond the battle. Yes, my sire!
Thy glories are no more. From the abyss
Of coming time, the cloud hath been exhaled,
That shall o'erwhelm our house. Brother, thou know'st
Not all; nor dreams, nor Urim, nor the voice
Of seer directs the king of Israel,
Whose nature, erst so dauntless, now doth shake
With unknown horror, whilst the spirit dark
Which from thy harp did fly, pursues him now

E'en to the refuge of the care-worn breast,
And o'er his slumber works with torturing power.
David, the hour is come, when for the priests
In slaughter stretched, and for the rites unblest
At Gilgal, and the wrath of Heaven but half
On Amalek performed, and for the war
Against thee waged, Jehovah will requite
The race of Kish. I plead not for myself:
I ne'er will quit with life, the field that drinks
My father's blood: When sets the sun that views
The approaching fight, the steps of Jonathan
Shall be no more discovered. But for them,
My sons, O speak again the words of peace
Twice told, when in the field we stood, ere yet
The trumpet's blast proclaimed the infant moon
In Gibeah. Say, wilt thou protect my seed
For ever?"

To whom David: "O my prince,
Why speak'st thou thus? Hath not the oath twice passed
These lips, when at the feast 'twixt me and death
Thou stood'st, ere to Ahimelech I fled?
Yet hear me once again. If to thy race

I shew not kindness, may Jehovah's curse
Chase me from woe to woe, whilst none shall dare,
With home, or morsel scant, or word of peace,
To shield the man who could thy wondrous love
Forget."

To whom the son of Saul: "Enough!
Thou art not changed, I am at rest again,
Since round my house thy fostering shade is twined,
As is the ivy's clasp, about some oak
By lightning scathed. But say, how looks the king
Of Gath upon the coming fight?"

Then thus
The son of Jesse: "Prince, I may not hide
The truth; nor need our tribes (for whom the sea
Hath parted, and the moon her course hath stayed,
And Jordan hath withheld his tide) a tale
Of fraud, to bid hope live. Achish is bold,
And undismayed regards the war: Not so
His lords; in their remembrance, lives the day
Of Elah, and of Michmash, and the form
Of Dagon prostrate twice before the ark
Of Israel's God, and his avenging wrath

That changed to groans the song of victory
In Gath, and Ashdod, and in Ekron, smit
With penal torment: yet the monarch's hope
Sustains their spirit, whilst with mystic rites,
They vainly strive to win from senseless things
Jehovah's purpose, and to-morrow's dawn
Will see (I ween) the uncircumcised arrayed
For final conflict." To whom Jonathan:

"Light of my soul, and wilt thou, (when the eye
Of Saul shall be in darkness closed,) around
That once great name, a hallowed curtain weave?
Will not the hope of Israel forget
Those deeds by envy taught, which but recoil
Upon the doer, as the words flung back
From side of glen, or valley, speak again
To him who utters them? Will not thy harp
(Which from his bosom oft hath loosed the grasp
Of the afflicting spirit) wake one strain
In his lament, who once was loved of Heaven?"

Then thus the shepherd chief: "Now as thy soul
Doth live, I do beseech thee, matchless prince,
Look on these tears, and doubt no more my love

For him, who as from nothing, raised me up
And decked my house with glory. Witness thou,
Whose spirit (through the maze of human thought
Diffused) for ever mocks the tongue of fraud;
Witness against me in unpardoning wrath,
If in this bosom ought save love is found
To thine anointed. From thy secret place,
Where meet the cherub's wings, (O thou who from
The far Egyptian stream, to Jordan's shore,
Didst lead the sons of Abraham,) hear now
My prayer for Saul, and with thy presence aid
(As erst) his goings forth. O why in Gath
Should the uncircumcised shout in scorn,
'Where now is Israel's God?' O shine once more
In mercy on our monarch's soul: Forgive,
Renew thy chosen one. Speak yet again,
Or from the unlifted veil, or in a dream
Of night, in silence, pouring on some breast
Thy secret will. O bring again the time
Of Gideon, or of him who at the flood
Of Kishon, crushed the pride of Hazar's king.
Where is the day of Jephthah, and of him,
Whose sire beheld thine angel clad in flame
Ascend from earth? O cast not out my prayer:

Break forth upon the foe, as when the seer
Of Ramah prayed at Mizpah for our tribes;
But soothe the son of Kish with thoughts of peace,
From thine own essence on his slumber breathed,
At this sweet hour, and from his bosom, drive
Thy minister of wrath upon the host
Of Achish, that Philistia's sons, once more,
In anguish may confess, that thou alone
Art the all-ruling King."

So prayed the chief,
With hands uplifted, and with streaming eyes
Fixed on the starry concave. But his words
Might not raze out the doom on high pronounced
Against the house of Saul; for there are things
Which holiest lips must ask in vain; else, might
Our frail intelligence (which scarce unveils
One secret force that moves the various play
Of these terrestrial elements) prevail
Against supernal wisdom, and confound
The concord of the universe.

Awhile,
Both stood in silent ecstacy, their hands

Close locked in mutual pressure, and their eyes
Revealing that unearthly sympathy,
Which made their spirits one.

Then thus the prince:
"Where are we? Could I stay the going hence
Of this pervading shadow, that shuts out
All save His presence, and involves our souls
Thus in each other.—No, the unsleeping tide
That bears us on, through tears, and smiles, and groans,
And shouts, and rending hearts, and kingdoms born
And crushed, is but His will, who deigns to guide
Our steps from His high throne. My other self,
Farewell. I have not trod in vain my darkling path
To-night; and if on earth we meet no more,
Yet in that deathless clime, which we from far
So oft have scanned together, (whilst beneath
Some palmy shade, in happier hours we sat,
And, mingling with the harp, thy Heaven-taught voice
Poured the sweet secrets of the unseen world
Upon my ravished soul;) yes, in that clime
Of the unsighing heart, and cloudless brow,
Twined in unfading youth, we both may feast

On those high joys, which from Jehovah's love,
Spring as a fountain from some boundless depth;
And as we tread those bright immortal plains,
(If on the tablet of our hearts shall live
The impress of the past,) our backward glance
Shall haply seek again this tearful world,
And mid its tossing elements, trace out
The path that led through this dim labyrinth,
Into eternal day. But lo, the stars
Are gliding westward. At my father's tent
I have been sought, the council summons me."

Then thus the shepherd chief: "Speak yet, my prince,
One word of her to whom my earliest love
Was breathed. Say, how endures she now the wrath
Of my offended king?"

Then Jonathan:
"O, she shines brightly through her woe, as doth
Some star that watches through a moonless night;
And ere the sun that now hath set was high
She sought our camp, and (as I since have learned
From one she trusts,) in conference with my sire

Revived the better thoughts, that long have slept
Within his wounded spirit. Darkly too
She spake of Doeg, bidding me beware
Of that all-daring Edomite, who works
Too strongly o'er our monarch's will. Withal,
Of some unknown conspiracy she told,
Against us aimed; and to the Eternal King
Commended him, to whom alone of men
Her heart is bound."

Then David: "May'st thou ne'er
For comfort seek in vain, O thou, whose voice,
Soothes deeper than the rarest juice e'er drawn
By utmost skill from root or flower. Farewell,
If in my enterprise I speed, a torch
One hour before the dawn shall wave in sight
Of Israel's camp; but if from Gilboa's hill,
Nought save the glaring of Philistia's fires
Appear, then know, our purpose may not stand.
Farewell, O wherefore do our twined hands
Thus mock that word? Sweet prince, Jehovah shields
His chosen ones, thou shalt be blest. Thy name
Is dear on high. Ah! wherefore do we weep?
Would that to-morrow were as yesterday;

The war-cry hushed, and fierce Philistia's host
(Like leaves of a departed summer) strown
Upon the battle-field. O, ere once more
The things of day shall wake and sleep, what deeds
Of hate may be endured and done! But hold!
The gale is still, and yet in yonder brake
There is a sound. Some forest beast perchance,
Or bird of night, doth part with stealthy foot
Or wing those leafy shadows. Hist, I would
The moon were not so young." Then Jonathan:

"I know that warrior step. He speaks, 'tis he,
'Tis Abner. Hail, thou might of Israel!"

To whom the son of Ner: "Now, by the life
Of Saul, great prince, since sun-set I have sought
Thy path, till (led by his high influence
Who loves our tribes) back to thy early youth
My spirit strayed, and thus thy ardent love
Of nature's secrets, and adventurous deeds
Spake to my heart, and from these musings, mixed
With the dark thought that foemen had surprised
Thy loneliness, awoke the trusted hope
That led me hither. Thus the viewless forms

That wander through our bosoms, each to each
Are bound by links unseen, and things long past,
(By them remingled with the present hour)
Control our being, as departed streams
By the etherial breath from ocean's plain
Absorbed, are thither borne, in clouds, where once
They flowed, and through their parched channels pour
(As erst) their dulcet tide. But haste we, prince,
No buckler shields thy breast, and Gilboa's hill
Is distant. Should some unseen messenger
But whisper in Philistia's camp that thou
(The hope of Israel) art forth alone,
At such an hour, the wail of death must rise
For Jonathan to-morrow. Nay, my chiefs,
I do conjure you, hear me. Prince, thy sire
Doth call for thee, this sun hath set in grief;
He will not seek repose, till thou return,
And O! that care-worn heart hath need of rest."

Then Jonathan: "My sire! The king! Away,
I stay too long. David, remember *me.*"

He said, and whilst their eyes diffused, and drank
The taintless love, that looks beyond the clouds

Of earth, the Hebrew prince, and he on whom
The sacred oil was poured at Bethlehem,
(What time for Agag, Saul delayed the wrath
Of justice infinite,) breathed once again
That word, which soon or late, in this dim scene,
Doth unaccord the sweetest strain, and toward
The Hebrew and Philistine armies bent
Their rapid course.

Meanwhile the Edomite
Had vainly sought for Jonathan, and marked
With rage, his purpose marred. What shall he do?
"Why hath the prince thus strayed? The son of Kish,
Or knows not, or is secret; and the chiefs
Speak as their monarch. Is the treason known?
But how? Is Albrok false? It cannot be.
Untold rewards, and vaster promises
Have sealed that Arab's lips. The sun scarce hangs
Above the western sea. The chosen band
Of Achish waits already at the post
Of ambush. Maoch's haughty son, e'en now
Chafes at the prize delayed, perhaps suspects
The faith of him who promised. The last beam
Is fading fast away—'Tis gone, and yet

The son of Saul comes not. What chance accursed
Hath borne him hence, and made assurance shake?"

Thus through the bosom of the Edomite
There passed the chill of doubt, whilst his keen glance
(Far thrown from Gilboa's mountain) vainly sought
The form of Jonathan, till in the camp,
The hurried footstep, and the rising hum
Of questions, (that would fill their appetite
With reasonless imaginings, or give
A tongue to silence,) and the breast quick heaved,
And restless eye, and forehead that revealed
The mazed soul, declared how for their prince
The tribes of Jacob trembled. In the tent
Of Saul the chiefs are met, and in each face,
With fear aghast, the Edomite hath read,
That without concert, Jonathan had left
The camp, and in his bosom felt the gleam
Of hope returning, mixed with purposes
Of crime, as yet unknown.

But who may paint
The king? As when some sea (upon whose wave
Slumbers the cloudless light of southern skies)

Is wrapt in gloom, beneath a day of mist
From its own breast exhaled, so that high front,
Of mould unmatched in Israel, (where once
Bright thoughts were traced, since first by Bethel's hill
He caught the hallowed symphony, and felt
The breath of Heaven,) by guilt-born woe, was dimmed.
Forth from his eye-balls flashed a regal soul,
Mixed with a beam of more than earthly fire,
(The kindling of the power that ruled within,)
Mournful, and fixed, and bright, as if no tear
Might flow to soothe that bosom. In his hand
He grasped the spear, that thrice had well nigh stained
With blood the hour of peace, what time his arm
Was reared at Gibeah, 'gainst his eldest born
And Jesse's son. Upon the monarch's brow
Each eye was turned, as thus with voice that poured
Dejection on the inmost soul, he spake:

"Another sun is set, but hope comes not.
Why are we here? Princes, yon seat is void.
Why should I tell the tale of sorrow, graved
On every aspect that around me lours?
The light of Heaven illumes our path no more:

Nor sacrifice, nor Ephod, nor the voice
Of seer, declares Jehovah's will. Your prince
Is lost, my son is lost. My heart, my heart.
O, Jonathan, where art thou? Stretched in blood
Upon the plain. Ah! why did I protract
The war with skirmish? Wherefore rushed we not
Together, or to death, or victory
In final battle? O, for but one tear!
Bear with me, warriors, am I not his sire?
Yet I am Israel's king. Let each now speak
If aught his soul perceives of remedy."

He ceased, and as a wave of ocean swells
Unheard by him, whose eye from far surveys
The tempest-vexed tide, so with a sigh
Deep drawn, but soundless, heaved his stormy breast.
In silent grief the chiefs beheld, and first,
The son of Ner (than whom a soul more brave
Was not in Israel found) stood up. His glance
Was as the messenger of joy, a dawn
To darkest night; and thus with words of hope
He spake:

"O, King of Israel's tribes, and ye

Assembled chiefs, give ear, nor lose we thus
The hour in grief; for, till the human eye
Shall scan futurity, he dims the gloom
Of earth, who yields him to despair. What though
Jehovah veils his will? All is not lost.
His way is wrapt in mystery, and oft
Upon the precipice we stand, ere shines
The light that from destruction saves, that man
May boast no more. The war yet hangs in doubt;
This very night, he may descend in dreams.
And for our prince, I yet have strong surmise,
That he for Israel's weal hath left the camp.
I marked him on the field, as day declined;
His footsteps toward our tents were turned, untired
He seemed with conflict; I approached, when he
After short salutation, climbed a crag
From whence he looked upon Philistia's host.
I would not gaze upon his loneliness,
Which still to the Eternal One is given,
Nor hath he since appeared. But 'tis his wont
Thus to confound the foe with sudden deeds;
Who but remembers Geba's garrison,
That fell before his arm? Or who the pass
Of Bozez, and of Seneh can forget,

Where on Philistia, with celestial might
He rushed, his purpose secret, save to him
Who did attend his steps? I counsel then,
That a selected band should seek the prince
On yonder plain, whilst yet expiring day
Makes bright the western sky. King, be it mine
To lead the search, and if thy valiant son
Still breathes this vital air, may God do so
And more to Abner, if by dawning light
I bring him not again."

He said, and thoughts
Of joy upon each warrior's face broke forth,
As in a night of clouds, if haply wakes
The northern blast, the starry fires make glad
The eye of vigil. By the Edomite,
New schemes of darkness were conceived, as thus
His guileful speech he framed.

"The son of Ner
Hath well advised, yet lest the prince be stayed
In the uncircumcisèd camp, 'tis fit
I aid this enterprise, for there are some
Among the foe, with whom I may confer

Unharmed, and thus may succour him for whom
We mourn."

Then Abner: "Edomite, be ruled
By me. He best will in this service speed
Who most hath shared our prince's solitude,
And marked his haunts. This vantage, well thou know'st
Is mine; nor shall I fear to seek the tents
Of Achish, (though no tongue will there support
My cause,) and in our monarch's name, perform
What need requires. The sacred bond of blood
Doth bind me to the prince, and nature's voice
Pleads for my going in this matter forth.
Then monarch, by his soul, (from whom my sire
And thine, received the vital element)
I pray thee bid me speed, for evil oft
By time is fed, till remedy is mocked,
Which else had crushed its growth.'

He said and sat;
And next him, Phalti (he to whom the spouse
Of Jesse's son, was bound by ties unblest,)
Arose. His spirit to the Edomite

Was linked by darkest sympathy, and thus
He strove upon his side.

"Let Abner speak
When armed hosts the cry of battle raise;
Or when some deed of subtilty, or might
In war is planned, and none will execute
With swifter hand than mine his purposes.
But by no finite thought are all things grasped,
No more than in one clime, the various stores
Of earth are found: the Edomite is wise
To guide amid perplexity, and well
Doth he now speak; for that our prince is free,
He scarce can hope, who by the untrembling ray
Of reason, not the flash of fancy, looks
Upon uncertain things. Around our camp,
The hill, and plain hath been surveyed afar;
Soon will the watch-fires gleam, and yet he whom
We mourn, is absent, therefore 'tis most fit
That Doeg seek Philistia's tents, where speech
Of art, far more than warrior's deeds, (though force
Like that which armed Manoah's matchless son,
Were in his onset,) may avail our prince."

He ceased, and Abner whilst his brow was bent
Upon the son of Laish, thus replied:

"I do beseech thee, monarch, heed him not,
Give *me* the conduct of this search. My breast
Is charged with *that*, which to thy secret ear
I will unfold hereafter. By the power
That ruled the lots at Gilgal, till thy name
Was to our tribes proclaimed, slight not my words;
But if, in many a battle-stainèd field,
I by thy side have cast to earth the force
Of Amalek, and Zobah, and the sons
Of Moab, and of Ammon, and the race
From Esau sprung, and proud Philistia's lords
Insatiable of war; and if my tongue
Hath still in council, uttered faithful words,
Then hold me true, for by thy soul, my thoughts
Do suck their life from deep reality."

He scarce had ended, when with scowl-like night
On Israel's captain cast, thus Phalti spake:

"Why are our clothes unrent? E'en now methinks
They drag the mighty Jonathan in bonds

Amid insulting foes. The moment flies
That from the toils of treachery might snatch
The pride of Israel. Bid *Docg* forth,
Great king. Shake off perplexity, be still
Thyself, ere present error, (like the breath
Of pestilence malign,) shall taint thy life
E'en to the last faint throb. And thou whose words
Are dark with presage, speak the mystery
Whose light so guides *thy* counsel. To thy peers,
Vaunt not thy deeds; but know, that Heaven's decree,
And not thine arm, made Israel's sword to fall
With weight resistless. Nor on acts of might
Alone doth hang the safety of our state;
Say, boaster, did *thy* piercing intellect
Reveal the treason of Ahimelech,
What time he armed and fed the foe of Saul?
Was it *thy* voice, that 'neath the aged tree
At Ramah, to our king proclaimed the flight
Of Jesse's son? *thy* hand that first avenged
The wrongs of Israel's ruler? Well doth shame
Upon thy forehead burn. Look to thyself,
And quell the envy that infects thy heart,
Lest whilst thou strivest with insidious words,
Thus to attaint thy greater, men should say

'Is Abner true who can reproach the foe
Of traitorous deeds?' "

He paused, and with a hum
Of plaudits half suppressed, some made reply,
Whilst others gazed in dread, upon the son
Of Ner, whose wounded spirit, from his eyes,
Shot icy terror to the false of heart.
Twice he arose, and twice the dreadful thought,
That at his king's behest, the sacred blood
Had flowed at Ramah, crushed into his soul,
Words, that had else, like Geyser's blasting stream
In northern climes upheaved, on Phalti's breast
Rushed with benumbing power.

" Hold, chief," (at length
He said.) " Call back thy taunts, say that thou rav'st,
Ere vain repentance track temerity,
Near as the shadow to the moving thing
From which it springs."

Then thus (with furious mien)
Ishui, second hope of Israel's throne.
" Disarm the son of Ner, who dares profane

With threats, the hour of counsel. Seize him,
chiefs!"

He said, and now swift deeds of blood had stained
Each Hebrew brand, for he, the foe of good,
(Who through the passions dark that shake the world
Of mortal mind, bears fearful sway on earth,)
Maddened their breasts; and words of wrath and pride,
And looks of hate, and blades unsheathed, and spears
Upraised, proclaimed the peril imminent:
Till he by whose command the ocean wave
(Though urged by wind, and by the utmost force
Of the pale moon to pass its unseen bound,)
Back to its ancient bed obedient rolls,
Within the bosom of the son of Kish
Awakened better thoughts, which thus he spake:

"Warriors, forbear; nor with insensate hands,
Prevent the sword of Achish. Better far
Had I been stretched upon the battle plain,
Than live to see this madness. Sheathe your brands,
Or drive them to my heart, and end the woes
That make the summer of my days grow cold.
Will mutual slaughter save from death, or bonds,

Your youthful prince? Doeg hath spoken well,
And well hath noble Abner answered him.
Aye by my father's life, both counsel well;
For in the breast of each, a spirit true,
By inborn light illumed, doth fix his gaze
On the dim future, like a faithful watch
Of night by mountain fire. Yet they who look
On things scarce visible, may well describe
With speech discordant, what they partly see,
And miss the truth which yet they seek, to win.
Something too bold, O Phalti, was thy tongue
Touching the thing which Abner hath reserved
(Haply with wisest purpose,) for my ear:
For strong fidelity, doth arm his words
With power, to sink into the inmost heart
Unchallenged by suspicion's voice, and claim
Consent of reason. There are elements,
Which, breathed in darkness, by the far spread root,
Adorn the giant-monarch of the wood
With fragrance and with shade; but from without,
To branch or broidered leaf, would give no touch
Of life, but rather, clog with essence strange,
That which perchance from gale, or sun, or shower,
Drinks health; so there are secrets for the ears

Of kings, (whose souls are as the root of states,)
Which, when revealed to other men, untune
The harmony of things. Enough of this,
And for the rest, let Abner seek my son
On yonder field, where hope shall most direct;
And let the Edomite with speed repair
To the Philistine camp, and there untwine
The web which treachery around your prince
Hath haply coiled. My will is spoken. Go.
Let swiftest action still on counsel wait,
And may this night's dissension be a dream,
Whence reason hath for ever waked our souls."

The warriors heard, and from the royal tent
Went forth, and to the place where lay the band
Of Achish in vain ambush, Doeg hied;
Unsated vengeance, in the new-born hope
Of instant triumph, striving to forget
Its famine.

"By yon troop he must be seized,
(He thought) or by some spoiling company;
And thus to my intent, himself hath given
Swift maturation. Yet he may be free.

Did I but tread this plain alone—but he,
The son of Ner is forth—if *they* should meet
Whole years of restless hours, and guilty deeds
High as the mountains piled, were in one night
Made vain. What secret lies in Abner's heart?
His glance was on me whilst my tongue deceived
The Hebrew king; and when I ceased to speak,
That look was on me still; and 'mid the din
Which followed, that same eye was on me fixed,
And in it lurked a scorn, as if my thoughts
Were thence flung back to me. Perchance—But how?
He cannot know. 'Tis thus, that this *perchance*,
And *if*, and *haply*, and such doubtful words,
Still make my resolution crawl, that else
Would rush on eagle's wings, to its design.
Away—He cannot *know*, and for *surmise*,
Such is my power with Saul, that proof itself
Would scarcely drive me from his heart. Who comes?
'Tis Albrok. Arab, wherefore art thou here?"

Then he. "My chief, whence art thou? Where are they
For whom the ambush waits? Be clear and swift

In thy excuse; or, as I live, thy steps
May not again approach Philistia's camp;
They murmur treachery."

Then Doeg: "Haste,
And bid the band of Achish from the field.
I'll to the king of Gath. Some chance to-day,
Hath crossed our purpose. Jonathan is not
Within the Hebrew tents."

Then Albrok thus:
"I saw the prince ere set of sun from far;
Alone he trod the plain, and if, or tree,
Or rock, could have concealed approach, this bow
Had stretched him lifeless."

Then the Edomite:
"Thanks, Arab, for thy zeal. All shall be ours,
The son of Jesse still within the host
Of Achish walks, to-morrow's dawn must look
Upon his going thence, for in his stay
Is that, which 'gainst the hope that rules my soul
Makes war, and almost bids it render up,
(Like a disgorged thing,) the past success

That feeds its life. Go, and if this dark hour
Present occasion of some sudden deed
Against the son of Saul, let him not 'scape."

He ceased, and to the camp in Shunem sped,
Where Malchis (he who of Philistia's lords,
Stood next to Maoch's son) in secret met
The Edomite, to whom in accent stern
Thus first he spake.

"Why com'st thou? Where is he
For whom twice fifty warriors wait in arms
By peril girt? Is this thy vaunted aid,
Thus to a solitary post to lure
The bravest of our youth, till hemmed about
In darkness, by those drinkers of the blood
Of old Canaan's children, they shall fall
Or yield to bonds inglorious? Dost thou hope,
(E'en as the insect that with far-spread net
Entraps the wanderer of the summer gale,)
To stretch thy self-born thread of treachery
From Gilboa's hill to Shunem, and unmarked,
To glide thereon from each to each, and feed
On twofold ruin? Answer me with words

That shall convert suspicion into trust,
Unshrinking trust, or with unnumbered blades,
By Dagon! we will hack thy trembling limbs,
Till on thy tombless flesh the carrion bird
May feast, nor need his claws to rend the food."

To whom with changeless brow the Edomite:
"Behold my bosom. Strike, impetuous man!
And when thy sword with Doeg's life hath reeked,
Let Achish back to Gath; and do thou bear
The thought that *thou* alone hast dashed thy prince
From hope, and marred the fair developing
Of purposes, that else to their effect
Had grown by strong necessity. For though
His host outnumbered far the fires that burn
On yon etherial plain, without my aid,
Philistia cannot vanquish. Keep thy threats
For others, on *my* heart they have no power.
Bethink thee, Malchis. Was I not this day
Free as the mountain wind? and should I thus
Have sought thy camp, thus braved thy mood of wrath,
When the design was crossed, had *I* betrayed?
Frown not on me, but let the mystery
To thee by me revealed when first we met,

Awake within thy bosom. Spake I not
Of force unseen, and of unerring light
By secret rites obtained, which to the arm
Of Saul gave victory, ere yet one sword
Had flashed, and made him tread the field of death
In terrible serenity? 'This power,
This light (I said,) now fires his breast no more;
But in its stead, a sickness of the soul
Doth lie upon him, whilst in Jesse's son
Such might appears, that 'tis by some believed
That he communes with more than mortal things.'
Spake I not thus? And did I not unveil
The cause, that 'twixt this shepherd and his king
Hath quenchless anger sown? And told I not,
How by the witchery of words, the son
Of Saul was so by this same David gained,
That Israel's monarch holds *him* for a foe,
Whom nature most would trust, whence in the state
Works cankering faction? Yet on me alone
(I warned thee) doth this hang; for, but that I
(By thirst for vengeance urged) still to the King
Reveal the perfidy of Jesse's son,
Soon would the voice of Jonathan, mound up
The gulph profound, by acts of hate hewn out

'Twixt Saul and David, whose all-daring hand
Would quickly reunite beneath its sway
The force of Israel, and faction thus
(Which now so aids your arms) would rage no more.
'Twas thus I counselled, and Philistia's chiefs
Approved. Your king approved. What madness then
Is on you, that the man whose ev'ry thought
Doth pine for your undoing, now walks free
Within your camp? Is David changed since first
To Gath he came, when the remembered song
Of Israel's maids awakened in your hearts
Suspicion of his purpose? Wisely then
Did ye review the past, and if the blood
Of him, by whom Goliah fell, had flowed,
The foot of Achish had ere now been heard
In Gibeah's palace. But his art prevailed,
Whom still ye trust, and in strange league have joined
With those he hates; and thou canst chafe at me,
Because my purpose hath been crossed, by him
Whom ye have hither led. Go to. Go to.
Where is thy former self? Chief, thou hast eyes
And ears to catch the deeds and words that bear
The impress of the thoughts of other men,
And in thy soul there is a power to frame

That which may blight with certain antidote
The blossomings of counsels. As *thou* art,
Such is the son of Jesse; such each one
Of his selected band, in wiles and acts
Of courage practised, whom your king endures
Within his host; and is it strange if these
(Thus by their own surrounded,) force in aught
The current of our will? By all the powers
That work in earth, and air, and sea, I swear
If David go not hence, we strive in vain.
This very day the Hebrew prince went forth,
As is his wont, nor hath he since returned.
In Israel's camp there is dismay, but well
I ween, that to commune with Jesse's son,
He is abroad, and thus we now have failed.
But if it be so, aye, and if they twain,
Thus meeting, should concert some deed of force;
(By lightest circumstance, that might arouse,
Surmise, unheralded,) am *I* the cause,
Or he who hath begirt himself by foes?
What, if this very night, that shepherd's band
Should wrap your tents in fire? What, if concealed
By gloom, an armed train from Gilboa's hill
Glide to your camp through those pretended guards?

If on Philistia's slumbering lords shall fall
That sleep to which no waking comes, and if,
Roused haply by some death-shriek, Maoch's son
Shall o'er his couch behold a falchion waved,
(Perchance by David's hand,) am *I* the cause
Or he who hath begirt himself by foes?
Or if (when in the day of final strife
Your host shall toil) the shepherd should betray
And spread destruction through the ranks of Gath
Till valour's self shall quail; am *I* the cause,
Or he who hath begirt himself by foes?
Malchis, this is no dream. In Abner's breast
(Who still the counsels of his prince doth share)
A secret lies, as in the royal tent
This day, himself declared. From other things
Which for my soul have speech, I gather up
Tokens, which to that ill advised vaunt,
Respond with deep accord. And well, methinks,
Philistine heads, high piled at Gibeah's gate,
Might for the son of Jesse pardon claim.
Now may thy hue of wrath to paleness change,
For timely fear is that from which oft springs
Untrembling confidence. Convene the chiefs,
Haste to the tent of Achish, and there raise

A cry unanimous, that may shake off
The lethargy that hath entombed his soul.
Speak to the king my words. Say that the son
Of Jesse doth on his declension live,
As fire, on the decay of that which feeds
Its rav'nous being. Let the dawn behold
The shepherd from your camp expelled. Till then,
Ye stand on rottenness. Believe my words
Or strike, and let the coming hour record
My faithfulness; for I have looked on death
Till I have grown familiar with its shade,
Ev'n as the things that with nocturnal foot
Or pinion, roam the earth or sky, find day
In deepest gloom."

He ceased, and Malchis thus,
(O'ermastered by that speech of guile) replied:
"Doeg, I wronged thee. But for long excuse
The time fits not. My temper, well thou know'st,
Is choleric, and Maoch's son to-night
Did chide because of thee. By me the lords
Are greatly swayed; already they detest
The stranger, who around our monarch's heart
Hath twined with serpent coil, which yet I trust

This night to rend, the rather as the chief
Hath left the camp, thus throwing evidence
On thy surmise. The King, not three hours since,
Declared to some his will to lead his power
To-morrow to the field, and force the son
Of Kish to final battle, when fierce words
Were heard against the shepherd, which in vain
Our monarch strove to silence; quickly then,
My task will be achieved."

Then Doeg thus:
"'Tis well. Yet let not Achish now forget,
How of the dark perplexity I spake
That clouds the heart of Saul, and of the thought
Which thence hath sprung, (to none save *me* disclosed,)
Of seeking one who with the dead communes;
If so he may attain the light his God
Denies. But, (for that Israel's law forbids
Thus to interrogate the unseen powers)
He still essays to learn by rites prescribed
The issue of the war. But all is vain;
And I at his command have therefore found
A woman of deep skill, at whose behest
The lips, by death long sealed, have speech again,

And utter truths beyond the farthest reach
Of this clay-girt intelligence. To her
Will Saul repair to-morrow. Let your king
Defer the battle, if no messenger
From me, be hither sent, ere day hath shone
One hour on earth. At night I will declare
To Achish her response.—Thus may we gain
Time that shall heal this day's mischance; for he
Who now hath 'scaped us, to Philistine chains
Must be consigned, ere join the hosts in fight.
For as a mountain fire by night high heaped,
Throws its quick soul afar, till darkest things
Grow radiant by infection of its beam,
So in the breast of Jonathan, is that
Which shines 'mid deepest gloom, with power to breathe
Its fervent spirit through unnumbered hearts,
And warm despair to firm resolve, the pledge
Of victory."

He ended, and with words
Of short approval, Malchis sought the tent
Of Maoch's son, where sat Philistia's lords
In council, and with furious speech thus poured
His fiery spirit forth.

"How long, ye chiefs,
Shall we confederation make with him,
Who views, at once with wonder and with scorn,
Each traitorous purpose into action nursed,
By the same hand that should have swept him hence?
Where is the shepherd (he whose faithful arm
Shall guard our monarch in the day of war)?
Where is he? Answer me. Within the camp,
And storing well the quivers of his band
With shafts to thin the ranks of Israel?
By Dagon! no. The son of Jesse roams
The plain to-night. But wherefore? Sent perchance
To seize some spoil of cattle. Haply too,
'Tis for the self-same cause that Jonathan
Hath left the Hebrew camp, his going forth
To none save Abner known. O, wondrous link
Of sympathy! Yes, princes, 'tis most true;
The son of Saul, and he by whom the hope
Of Gath was slain, seek each a prey to-night,—
Both seek *one prey*, a costly prey. Look not
With eyes that question me, but if my words
Engender not their own unravelling,
Then let a few short hours discover all
Your madness. For myself, I stay not thus

To perish without fame. My blooming bride
And infant son at Ashkelon, and hills
White with unnumbered flocks, demand *my* care;
Farewell. And when this shepherd with the prince
Of Israel leagued, shall strike, when at the hour
Of darkness, o'er each couch a Hebrew brand
Shall lighten, 'mid the fires of falling tents;
Or when upon the battle-field, the swords
Of twice-three hundred traitors, shall hew down
The trusters of their fraud, and Maoch's son
Among the first shall fall, then will your groans
Convert my counsel, to prophetic words,
And in your dying breasts shall wake the thought,
That by herself, Philistia is undone;
For let the gods so shield my homeward steps,
As I by clearest proof, this night have known
That on the will of David, hangs a doom
That in our empty halls shall raise the voice
Of widows, and of maids, in loud lament.
Farewell! we meet no more."

So spake the chief:
And as in some far range of giant steeps,
(Or where the Alps are piled, or where stretched out

Along Columbia's strand, old Andes stops
The rushing tempests of the east and west,
And on two oceans keeps eternal watch;)
Some cloud-girt crag, whose stony roots without
Are rent by ceaseless torrents, whilst within
Imprisoned waters (by the expansive force
Of frost congealed) upheave the formless mass,
Wakes, as it thunders to the glen below,
The countless replication of its fall
Amid the rocky waste; so found those words
Impassioned echo in the bursting hearts
Of fierce Philistia's lords, as with one voice
Of loud acclaim, (each warrior's armed hand
Upraised,) an oath was passed, that ere the dawn,
The Hebrew band to Ziklag should depart.
The son of Maoch heard, nor might resist
(Though grieved) that swift decree; and further speech
Of Malchis, repetition made, of that,
Which Doeg had disclosed; when after short
Debate, his counsel was approved, and sleep
Once more upon those hostile tents came down.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE

FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

An invocation of the Divine kingdom as a remedy for the coldness, and recklessness of men, of which Saul is an example—Return to the subject—The dawn of the second day drawing on, Jonathan attended by Nathan the prophet, goes abroad to look for the signal which David had promised to make, if the plan they had concerted for the battle, should be found practicable—Jonathan and Nathan discourse of the state; the latter mentions a rumour of the king's intention of consulting a witch, and moreover relates, how he had discovered from Abiathar the priest, (who was with the Hebrews in the Philistine camp,) the attempt of Doeg, to get David expelled therefrom—Jonathan, acknowledging Nathan's fidelity, dismisses him to the tent of Saul, promising to come thither himself at sun-rise, in order to make another effort to overthrow the influence of Doeg—Jonathan from a rock looking towards the enemy's camp for the sign of fire, sees a torch approach, he descends, and meets a follower of Abiathar, who tells him, that Doeg had prevailed to drive David from the Philistine camp, and that the Hebrews were then about to depart for Ziklag. The prince sends a message to David, and returns to his own camp. In the way, he is met by an attendant, who hastens him to the tent of Saul, then labouring in a distempered sleep—Jonathan arrives at the tent where he finds Nathan—The king's dream described—Day dawns—Jonathan gives a charge to Nathan—The king awakes, and opens his grief to the prince, who consoles him, and endeavours to set the ambition, and treachery of Doeg, and the fidelity of David in their true light—Abner arrives at the tent of Saul. He addresses the king, confirming the words of Jonathan, and adding some particulars—Saul in alarm asks counsel of Abner, who makes several suggestions which the king resolves to follow.

—A cry of war being heard, Saul arms, and rushes from the camp; but no enemy appearing, he climbs a hill to reconnoitre—Doeg observes him, and (rejoicing in the success of the false alarm which he had raised to put an end to the conference between Saul, Abner, and Jonathan,) repairs to the king now alone, after giving a charge to Albrok—The king receives him with accusation—He defends himself, and at length by various arguments, recovers the confidence of Saul, and proposes to conduct him at night, to Endor, to consult a sorceress, as to the event of the battle to which he declares that Achish intends to force the Hebrews on the morrow—Ishui is discovered on the plain, to whom Saul, (having finally agreed with Doeg) gives some directions—The king and Ishui, repair to the royal tent—Jonathan (who by the deceit of Albrok, had sought his father on the field,) at length encounters Ishui, who communicates to him the commands of Saul, advertising him of the approaching battle—Jonathan by his reply, excites the jealousy of his brother—The latter is appeased, and returns to the Hebrew camp—Jonathan remains on the plain, in great perplexity—Abner encounters him, and relates how their hope had been overthrown, he however consoles the prince, and repairs with him to the tent of Nathan, to consult how Doeg may yet be opposed.

This Book occupies the greater part of the second day—The scene is sometimes in the Hebrew camp, sometimes on the plain.

BOOK IV.

O, WHEN on this terrestrial world shall break
That hour of brightness, seen from far by him,
Upon whose lips by Seraph's hand was laid
Celestial fire? Fount of unfading light!
On that sweet dawn which from thyself did spring,
Pour full effulgence down, for earth is cold,
And few (like him who ere the flood broke forth
Upon the guilty race, undying passed
To the immortal clime,) aspire to walk
With thee, Eternal King, (by grace upheld
Above this crumbling scene,) and shake away
The taint, that on the flower, of essence mixed
Of earth and Heaven, by demon's breath was shed,
Whilst scarce its bloom had drunk the balmy sky
Of Paradise. But on his drop of time,

(The slave of passion's blast, and thickening still
The inborn crust, that from his soul shuts out
The communings of Heaven,) man drives along
With ceaseless speed, e'en to that edge abrupt,
Inevitable, thence, through clouds to fall
Into a boundless sea.—Such course was thine,
O earliest monarch of the favoured race.
Where are the warning words at Jordan's stream
By him pronounced, who from the mountain cliff
Beheld a portion of his light, whose day
Hath neither morn nor evening; or that voice
Which cried more late on Gilgal's hallowed plain,
(By him upraised, whose prayer could wrap the sky
Of Palestina, in attesting gloom,)
When in primeval glory first thou stood'st
Amid rejoicing thousands? Heard'st thou not
The pealing witness of supernal power,
When spake the Seer, that (reckless of the beam
Caught by thy bosom on that sacred day
When from Jehovah came the three-fold sign)
Thou with thyself didst war, till on thee fell
The doom that now recalls my mournful song?

Still was the orient clime in night involved,

When from the Hebrew camp the eldest born
Of Israel's princes came, and at his side,
One of the prophet band, to whom the son
Of Saul thus spake:

"Nathan, it cannot be.
Hath not my sire incessant hate declared
Against those cursed familiars with the dead?
And can I think that he whose breast hath felt
The rapture of the heavenly trance, will seek
From fountain so impure?—I'll not believe.
Besides, hath not his zeal by strictest search
So purged our land from that detested brood,
That here *at least*, obedience to our law
Hangs not upon his choice?"

To whom the seer:
"O prince, the hearts of men (save when attuned
By Israel's God to his high will) are chords
Which to the touch of outward things respond,
As doth the harp unto the minstrel's hand.
Thus may to-day upon to-morrow cast
No augury; and for the rest, be sure
Full many a shade still holds some practiser

Of that unhallowed art. Howe'er this be,
It hath been whispered thus, and well thou know'st
I speak in love to Saul."

Then Jonathan:
"I know that thou art faithful to our house,
And as the stream which in the waste up-sprang
To Ishmael's weeping mother, such to me
Hath been thy converse in this hour of gloom.
Say, hath thy diligence discovered ought,
Touching the Edomite's design?"

To whom
Thus Nathan: "Prince, to thy suspicion yield,
For Doeg is not true, or presage, clear
As e'er the future to the present linked,
Is voiceless. From the band of Jesse's son,
Abiathar (as best occasion serves)
With me communion holds. From him I learn
That in Philistia's lords the Edomite
Hath roused such hatred 'gainst the shepherd chief,
That Achish scarcely stays him in his camp.
With the uncircumcised, the Hebrew band
Mingles no more, nor at the evening meal,

Nor at the council; but with ceaseless watch,
They in their quarter guard their leader's life
From sudden perfidy."

Then Jonathan:
"Nathan, my inmost heart doth thank thy zeal,
And should the future o'er my will unbind,
Swift recompence shall with thy virtue strive
In hopeless conflict for equality.
Yon fires burn dim, nor do our guards renew
Their light. Day rushes westward, and the sleep
That (when o'er-vexèd nature first sinks down
Beneath the load of thought) scarce holds the king
With feeble grasp, will quickly render up
His soul to consciousness. Speed to his couch;
Guard well his waking from the Edomite.
The rising sun shall find me at his tent;
And may Jehovah with persuasion edge
Our words, that they may bear into the heart
Of Saul conviction of *his* perfidy,
Whom most we dread; Abner will aid our cause."

He spake, and Nathan to the camp returned;
As Jonathan, to where the Hebrew fires

Glowed distant, took his way; and from a rock
In Gilboa's mountain, toward Philistia's host
Looked through the gloom of night.

"It is the hour,"
(At length he said, in accents which scarce broke
Upon the ear of thought,) "and yet the sign
Appears not. Hath the slayer of our priests
Prevailed, and art thou fallen? No. *Thy* locks
Have felt the sacred unguent, and the will
Of the Celestial King hath round thee shed
That which may mock at danger. Thou shalt reign,
And look hereafter on this time of strife,
As one who from a rock beholds the storm
From which his bark hath 'scaped: so speaks the tale,
To me in secret by the seer made known.
Yet from Abiathar, no doubtful speech
Condemns the Edomite. The son of Ner
From other things like apprehension draws,
And treachery o'er David may prevail
Awhile, e'en as an earth-born mist may wrap
The face of day's bright ruler, till, (dispelled
By his etherial force,) the shadow fades

To nothingness. But for the thought, that Saul
Will seek those dealers in the art abhorred
That with the dead holds converse, gracious power!
O! if this purpose in my father's breast
Hath been indeed conceived, o'ermaster it.
Thanks, light of Israel! The torch. But no,
It waves not. Haply, on some eminence
The bearer stands awhile, uncertain yet,
If thence his signal—by my father's life!
It nearer comes. It stands. It moves again,
And swiftly. How my bosom throbs to meet
Yon wanderer of the night! I will descend."

Thus musing, from the rock the Hebrew prince
Wound his steep way, and fearless sought the light
Which to his practised eye revealed what seemed
An Israelite, to whom the son of Saul:

"O, thou! whose foot doth so prevent the dawn,
Why seek'st thou Gilboa's hill? If well I read
Thy gait beneath this sunless sky, thou com'st
In peace to Israel; if not, I here
Forbid thine onward path, and do demand
Thine errand."

Then the stranger: "Blest be he
Who doth direct the counsels of our tribes,
That I have found thee, hope of Israel.
Behold Benaiah; him who from the flames
Of Nob scarce with Abiathar escaped,
At whose behest I come with heavy news.
Thou seek'st the sign of fire; but, prince, that sign
Will ne'er illume the plain. Within the host
Of Achish, David walks no more. The voice
Of Doeg hath prevailed. This very night
Philistia's lords did by their gods protest,
That Jesse's son should from the camp depart.
The king of Gath did grieve, and with excuse
'Gainst their suspicion strove; but all was vain.
E'en now our tents are folded, and our band
Waits but the signal of the shepherd-chief,
Who did to thee commend himself with words
Of loyal love. To Ziklag is our course.
God guard the King and thee, sweet prince, and blast
The treachery of him by whom our priests
Were slain. Farewell:"

He said, and Jonathan
Thus answered: "Would that thou couldst read my heart,

That thou mightst bear away to Jesse's son,
Thoughts which no words may tell. The fragrant breath
Of flowers, the voice of music breathing things,
The light of bodies luminous in earth
Or sky, the ardent soul of fire, each force
That circulates throughout these elements,
Can pour its subtle being from afar,
Expressing all its nature: Man alone
Oft feels a ventless energy; for words
(Though breathed from glowing hearts) may not diffuse
The ecstacy of thought. Yet, tell the chief,
That as the plant in Gilead's mountains nursed,
Whence renovation flows, such to my soul
Is David's image. Fainter is the gleam
Of stars. The dawn approaches. Go, and Heaven
Protect thy path."

He said, and to the camp
Of Israel returned, which, ere he reached,
One from the tent of Saul encountered him,
And thus with voice, by fear and speed confused,
Bespake the prince.

"O, haste thee to the King:

His sleep is agony. His limbs do shake;
And in his face is *that* which on my heart
I would not bear, to be the Lord of earth.
I do forget thy presence, pardon me."

Then Jonathan: "O, horror! say by whom
My sire is watched. Where is the Edomite?"

To whom the messenger: "I know not, prince.
Nathan beholds our monarch's couch, and oft
He hath essayed by gentle act and word,
To calm the anguish, or unlock the twine
Of that untranquilled slumber. On the seer,
His open eye is fixed, but yet the king
Wakes not."

As thus he spake, they gained the tent
Of Saul. A moment on his panting breast,
The prince in silence gazed, ere to the seer
He whispered, "Hath he uttered ought?"

To whom
The prophet. "Thoughts disjointed, (from the store
Of sad remembrance rent by fancy's hand,)

Have broken from his lips. He groans. Thy voice
Will haply dissipate the hideous trance
That hangs upon his sense. But soft, he speaks:

"My arms I say. Give me my arms. Bid sound
The silver trumpets. David is not slain.
'Tis false. He lives I say. He fled. Begone,
Thou muttering thing! Why I beheld thee wound
In funeral garb. *Upon* them, Jonathan!
And though the seer hath frowned on me in wrath,
And though our priests are fallen, and the son
Of Jesse walks in Israel no more,
We will not fear them. See, they fly, they fly!
Yet am I sick; The torturer again
Is at my heart. O Jonathan, unbind
My crown; it presses me to earth, and Saul
Is king no longer. Such the word pronounced
On high. Call me the minstrel. What alone?
Not one to succour Israel's king? My spear
Shall grave my wrath upon your hearts. Hence! hence!
No no. The strings are mute; he will not strike
His harp for Saul. He frowns on me. O help!
Lay but thy hand upon my brow. I burn,
I die!"

Thus raved the slumbering king in speech
With groans commixed; his voice mournful or fierce,
As o'er his bosom ruled the varying mood
Of that dark dream. So when, with tempest fraught,
Upon some forest huge the blast descends,
Now with high note like ocean's roar, it shakes
The leafy world, now to a sigh expires
In fitful cadence. O'er that couch of woe,
The prince in anguish bent; whilst from the East,
The hue of morn arose, as to the seer
He said.

"The camp awakes; I pray thee charge
The guards, that, save the princes, and the son
Of Ner, none may approach the royal tent;
For to the common ear, the pangs which thus
O'erleap the threshold of his stricken heart,
Must not be known."

Scarce had the son of Saul
Thus said, when from the king there burst a cry
Of fear, that from his senses rent the veil,
Which pent his spirit in reposeless gloom,
From outward things, to that distempered world,

To whose dark confine, through a dawnless night,
Celestial justice soon or late shall doom
The soul, which spurns the renovation given
By grace supernal. For upon itself,
Each nature rebel to its proper good,
Must retribution wreak, and feed per force
On its own desolation.

From his couch,
Sudden the Hebrew king up sprang, and cried
"I'll sleep no more. By Heaven! I'll sleep no more,
Till on our plains I stretch those dogs of Gath,
Or I myself am slain. Who waits without?
To arms, O Israel, and on yon field,
Ere set of sun, let Saul or Achish lie;
For, by my father's life! I will not walk
Thus on the edge of doubt, thus nightly fall
At fancy's bidding to the gulf below.
Who's there? What, Jonathan? Why art thou here?—
O eldest born of an unhappy sire!
If from the future hour, the shapes that come
In sleep upon man's bosom, catch their speech,
Then are our glories like to withered things
Before the whirlwind driven. Yet let us forth;

And though unearthly forms before me rise,
And for Philistia war, till in our host
From every palsied hand the weapons fall,
I will not turn from death. But for thyself,
I do beseech thee live. By *thee*, no priests
Have been in slaughter laid: no word from Heaven
Against the seed accursed of Amalek
Pronounced, hath been by *thee* rejected. Live,
My son. Thou art beloved on high, and he
(Whose front, e'en now, reflects the dawning tint
Of that bright beam which on my parting day
Scarce sheds a twilight lustre,) loves thee well.
O, live! and may the King, whom all things serve,
Grant thee to snatch my name from infamy,
And be hereafter to our faded house,
Ev'n as the day of spring. Then, if beyond
The last convulsion which must shake us forth
From this terrestrial life, or joy, or grief
Hath place indeed, and if the things of earth
May track our spirit to some unknown clime;
Saul shall rejoice once more."

So spake the King
Israel in accent that declared

How weak the hope which in his bosom flashed,
More transient than the beam that breaks at night
From fly phosphoric, on some orient shade.
The prince in sorrow heard; and in his breast
Arose a voice, which with those mournful words
In sad accordance spake. Yet to explore
The last receding beam which struggled through
That hour of gloom, he strove, as to console
The monarch's woe he thus essayed:

"O, sire!
Let not the forms which on our slumber come,
Upon thy heart have power; for, (like to waves
On ocean gendered, through the mortal breast,
Sleeping or waking, sweeps a phantom throng
Unwearied, countless, which (when, lulled to rest,
The force of reason fails) oft thrall the soul
With monstrous domination, and transmute
Falsehood and truth at will; save when descends,
By special grace, in visions of the night,
The thrill prophetic. What shall be, is seen
By Him alone, whose essence is the fount
Of all things. Yet of times immanifest,
The present oft, by moulding energy,

Is lord; and man, (by Heavenly force upheld
Against necessity of fall, from taint
Of poisoned nature bred,) is to himself
His fate, for final weal or woe; nor shall
The mightiest elements, that from within,
Or from without us, move the unseen world,
To our undoing chain our will. The root
Of hope is with this mortal mould entwined,
Whilst o'er us still, celestial mercy keeps
A sleepless watch. Forsake not then thyself,
O Heaven-anointed king. All is not lost;
The links that bound Jehovah to our house
In happier days, may be restored; the force
Of penitence unfeigned, is strong to win
The love of the Omnipotent, and arm
For Israel, *that*, which shall laugh to scorn
The uncircumcisèd power. Hear me, my sire.
I supplicate thee, hear; whilst for a man
I plead, who once was by thine inmost heart
Beloved; till, like a wind from wilds unblest
Exhaled, (whence on some verdant valley falls
The touch of parchèd skies,) so, from the soul
Of envy poured, the reek of breath malign
Conveyed the dire contagion to thy breast.

Bear with me, monarch, for by ev'ry hope
Which props my steps upon this darkling bourn
Of human things, (where wrapped in gath'ring clouds
A moment yet we stand) I swear that not
For David's sake I speak, but to assuage
The pang within thy heart by trait'rous tongues
Awakened; whence, through all our state, hath spread
The root of discord, whilst to foemen's halls
Is fled the man who for our tribes hath strown
The field with slaughtered thousands. Yet, from deeds
Like these, when, nursed by envy's breath, there sprang
A monstrous growth of accusation false;
When for the voice of praise, and glance that speaks
The heart's deep confidence; when for the cry
Of welcome, ere his tread that threshold crossed
On which his arm so oft had piled the spoils
Of Israel's foes, the menace half pronounced,
Died on the *lip*, but from the *eye-ball* flashed,
Mocking each courteous phrase; when girt by spies
He moved, whose strong fidelity to death
Had borne him, swiftly as the spirit caught
From the recoiling wood impetuous, drives
The arrow to the mark, had not a power
Unseen sustained his steps:—upon such deeds,

When such requital fell, what vengeful stroke
Of Jesse's son, e'er to our house revealed
His sense of wrongs unnumbered? On his brow,
What look of pride e'er kindled? Was not still
That matchless hand upon the harp-string heard,
Whene'er the hour of sadness on thee lay?
And when on tokens perilous, there came
The foul interpretation of fierce deeds;
When for his life he fled from brake to crag,
What act upon that mighty name distilled
The taint of treachery? Else, o'er thy sleep,
Why waved his falchion in Engedi's grot,
Bloodless? And wherefore at Hachilah's hill,
Flowed not thy life, what time thy spear and cruise
He bore away, whilst in forgetfulness
Thy power was round thee stretched? O! if men's thoughts
Record themselves by deeds, he could not bear
Rebellion in his heart. Did not thy voice
Attest his innocence? Ah! wherefore then
Did souls accursed again thy sense becloud,
And with the slime of their own guiltiness
Incrust the lustre of his memory
Within thy breast rekindled? On what food

(More scant than is the nutriment that feeds
The rock-born moss) did thy suspicion live,
On which the envenomed weeds in other hearts
Ingendered, did entwine themselves? Yes, King
Of Israel, imaginings of guilt
To thee unknown, have with insidious clasp
Upon thine errors climbed, and from thyself
Sucking development, against thyself
Have made thee toil, till swiftest antidote
May scarce outstrip their tendency. List, sire,
Whilst from his tangled web of fraudful words
And actions foul, in loyal seeming masked,
I tear the reptile forth, whose loathsome grasp
Is on the vitals of our state, and bid
Thee look upon thy foe. The Edomite—
That herdsman who at Ramah first revealed
The flight of Jesse's son:—'tis *he*. I here
Denounce him for the man, who, lifted up
By sateless love of power, (or from his own
Dark nature born, or by intelligence
Malign inspired,) upon our house doth war.
He with each circumstance, that else had passed
Unheeded as the leaf upon the wind,
Hath fed the jealousy, which in thy heart

Against the tamer of Goliah's might,
In evil hour arose, and thus hath wrought
Thy fear into *his hope.* The son of Ner,
And I thy eldest born, have vainly striven
To disentwine the cord which to his will
Hath bound thee; till his spirit from success
Drinks lethargy, and confidence o'er-fed
Hath undisguised itself. Mark, King. The son
Of Jesse walked but yesterday within
The uncircumcisèd host. Nay,—frown not thus;
I read thy mind. O, silent be the lip
In everlasting night, which dared to breathe
The thought, that for the woe of Israel
He sought Philistia's camp. By his high sway,
Who moulds the unstable play of mortal things
Into his changeless purpose, to the host
Of Achish I went forth, in hope to try
The secret tidings late from Shunem sent
To Abner, fraught with accusation bold
Against the Edomite, who (if the tale
Say sooth) hath with Philistia's lords prevailed
To drive the son of Jesse from their camp,
And dash from their accomplishment, resolves
Of glorious import to our tribes. The tents

Of the uncircumcised I therefore sought,
Which, ere I gained, I was by David met;
Who did to me make known with what intent
He with the son of Maoch was encamped:
How in the coming fight he thought to aid
Our tribes with sudden onset; and withal,
Forewarned, where in the adverse power his band
Would war, and at what moment they would spread
Destruction through the foes of Israel.
'A sign of fire, (he said,) ere break of day,
Shall shew if, as I ween, the king of Gath
To-morrow will the final conflict dare.'
Wherefore, O sire, upon the plain whilst yet
Nocturnal things before the eye of dawn
Shrank not, I sought the token, but in vain.
Like years the moments passed: when, lo, a man
Moved swiftly toward our tents. The word of peace
I proffered and received; for from the band
Of David came he, and thus briefly spake:
'Behold Benaiah, him who from the flames
Of Nob, scarce with Abiathar escaped,
At whose behest I come with heavy news.
Thou seek'st the sign of fire, but, prince, that sign
Will ne'er illume the plain. Within the host

Of Achish, David walks no more. The voice
Of Doeg hath prevailed. This very night
Philistia's lords did by their gods protest,
That Jesse's son should from the camp depart.
The king of Gath did grieve; and with excuse,
'Gainst their suspicion strove, but all was vain.
E'en now our tents are folded, and our band
Waits but the signal of the shepherd chief,
Who did to thee commend himself with words
Of loyal love. To Ziklag is our course,
God guard the King, and thee, sweet prince. Farewell.'
Sire, thou hast heard my story, and if ought
On man may cast suspicion, be thou wise
Whilst wisdom may avail; or, by my life,
This Doeg (like some river swift, that flows
Through sunless caves) will bear thee, succourless,
Beyond the reach of hope. Without the tent,
One pauses, 'tis the valiant son of Ner,
And in his face is that which doth announce
Great tidings. Hail! thou ruler of our war.
What seekest thou?"

To whom the son of Ner:
" God save the King! I crave a conference.

And, as a stony mass upon some lap
Of waters cast, so may my words sink down
Into thy breast with an abiding weight,
And on thy will have power: for, as the God
Of Israel doth live, and as thy soul,
O king, doth live, they are the final things
By which thou yet mayst stay thy downward course,
To the abyss profound, whose noisome reek
Already chills thy house." He said; and Saul
With gesture that commanded farther speech
To him made answer, and thus Abner spake:

"Thrice, monarch, well thou know'st, since round the tomb
Of old Elkanah's son our tribes did weep,
Have I endured thy chiding, to disclose
The canker, which upon our state hath preyed,
Since by our maids was sung the victory
In Elah's valley from Philistia won.
Thou heard'st; and yet didst render up thyself
To him, who on thy jealousy, conceived
Against the son of Jesse, hath built up
His purposes; and like some reptile foul,
In gloom sepulchral bred, on our decay

Hath battened. Thus I spake; and thus once more,
I raise my warning voice, whilst ten-fold proof,
(From tidings drawn, which, ere the circling day
Upon our land did break, to Gilboa came,)
Hath from suspicion's eye so purged the film
Of doubt, that demonstration o'er my speech
Pours its broad light. One in the hostile camp,
Holds (in requital for some courtesy)
Much free communion with Abiathar,
Who (watchful still of each occasion given
To scan the counsels of the uncircumcised,)
Hath oft the warrior lured to where the band
Of David is encamped, and using there
The mood which in the banquet hour unlocks
The hearts of men, Abiathar hath gazed
Upon Philistia's secrets, tracking thus
His tortuous path, who by thy overthrow
Aspires to reign in Israel. Yes, king,
The Edomite against thy house conspires.
'Tis *he*, who from thy fear of Jesse's son,
Hath nourished into life a growth accursed
Of sorrows numberless. 'Tis *he*, who twice
Hath in thy bosom quenched the better light,
Which all too transient gleamed, what time the hand
Of David twice was o'er thy slumber raised,

Yet spared thy sacred life. 'Tis *he*, whose tongue
At length prevailed to drive from Israel,
The man by whom Jehovah most hath blest
Our arms with victory. 'Tis *he*, who (leagued
With Maoch's son,) hath moved Philistia's chiefs
To chase the son of Jesse from their tents,
And thus hath marred the hope, whose blossoming
Had made thee smile, when in the coming fight,
His faithful train had stretched *him* in the dust,
(By his own host entombed,) who fondly deemed
The sword of David in rebellion drawn.

"Such, king, was the intent, which to the camp
Of Achish led the shepherd, who by thee
From thy defence shut out, with quenchless zeal
E'en in thine own despite, to work thy good,
Thus strives. And such (O son of Kish,) is *he*
Who (by thyself, against thyself upheld,)
Had yesterday, (but that celestial power
Restrained his will,) to foemen's hands consigned
Thine eldest born. Thou start'st, but hear me, king.
'Twixt Gilboa's hill and the Philistine camp,
Twice fifty warriors did in ambush wait
Ere the last sun was set; and had the prince

Led forth the embassy by thee proposed,
Unto the hostile tents, inglorious bonds
Had snatched him from thy side, and armed thy foe
With that, which, more than countless multitudes
Of giant mould, would shake thy heart, and chain
Thy will to his, whose slightest breath could doom
Thy child to swift destruction. Such, O Saul,
Is the dark peril o'er thee hung by him
Whom haply still thou trustest; for 'tis he
Who taught the uncircumcisèd king to twine
This snare for Jonathan, that holding thus
Thy will to Achish bound, he might o'erleap
The chance of battle, and upon our state,
At once the thraldom of Philistia cast.
And for this service, Maoch's son hath sworn
In presence of his lords, that in his name
The Edomite shall rule in Israel.

"Monarch, my words are truth. Upon the *past*
A light hath dawned; but in the coming hour,
Conspiracy in deeper gloom may shroud
Her steps. Awake; ere, from thy throne plucked down
By this high reaching arm, thou shalt bewail
In sorrow impotent, that Abner warned
In vain."

He ended; and as when to one,
Who through a starless night some unknown deep
Hath roamed, (by current borne noiseless but swift,)
The beam of day reveals the headland huge,
That threats his rushing prow, he starts amazed,
And with each fleeting hope by turns communes;
So through the breast of Saul, that speech of fear
Shot hollow yet unfelt, as thus he spake:

"O Abner, like a beacon fire upheld
In darkest night, so do thy accents cast
Upon the blackness of my guilty life
A hideous demonstration. Speak, O speak,
If ought thy soul perceives, which to our state
May renovation bring."

To whom with joy,
The warrior thus: "O king, the backward path
From error, surest still to strength doth lead:
Bid seize the traitor. Speed to Ziklag straight
A messenger, who may to David bear,
And to Abiathar, an oath of peace
From thee. Say that the Edomite no more
Our counsels sways; and pray them, by their love

For Israel, to hasten to our camp.
Avoid the general fight, till at thy side
The son of Jesse stands; for in that arm
Is more than mortal force, and to the priest
Jehovah yet once more may manifest
His will. I stay upon thy word."

To whom
Thus Saul: "'Tis well. Let not delay bereave
Thy wisdom of its fruit. This hour conceives
An antidote against the plague of years,
Or I am king no more. But hark without.
What tumult fills the air? They shout to arms.
Away! Again they cry. May earth unclose,
And gorge me living in her stony womb,
Ere men shall say, Saul like a woman fell,
Slain in his tent. Give me my bow and spear;
I care not for the *mail.* This beaming crown,
And these gold circled arms shall round my steps
Shed victory."

So spake the Hebrew king,
His matchless form dilating, and his eyes
Flashing a spirit valorous, though now

By Heaven no more illumined; and him the prince
Thus answered:

"Stay thee yet, O mighty sire,
Till I have armed. Go not unguarded forth:
That regal brow is for unnumbered bows
The mark."

Then Saul: "Arm straight, and follow me.
Abner, attend the prince. I may not pause."

He said: and through the thick array of tents,
(That poured a countless throng of warriors forth,)
Impetuous strode, and (with a voice more loud,
Than e'er at night from famished lion came
On Afric's startled wastes,) he raised the cry
Of onset. Swiftly from the camp he rushed,
But found no foe; though scattered here and there,
(As dropt in flight,) Philistine weapons lay.

Amazed the Hebrews stand, whilst each to each
Reveals the question hopeless of reply,
On ev'ry face inscribed. The son of Kish,
To where from elevation steep, his glance

Far swept the plain below, hied him alone;
Not unobserved by Doeg, who, (concealed
Amid the warrior crowd,) *Him* thus bespake
To whom his heart was open. "Albrok, see,
Our purpose works. The council is dissolved,
And they whom most we fear are at his side
No more. This hour is mine. Be it thy part,
To cherish yet the panic we have raised,
Till I with Saul have spoken. Keep the prince
And Ner's proud son, at distance from the king."

So speaking, to the rock where gazing still
Toward Shunem, Israel's monarch stood, he bent
His upward way, and thus with reverence low,
The son of Kish bespake:

"God save the king!"

Then Saul: "This salutation ill befits
The lip of traitors, for against themselves
It cries to Heaven." To whom the Edomite:

"Aye, king. But woe to him, who holds for truth
The false one's voice."

To whom with bending brow
The monarch thus: "And woe to him by whom
Those words of fraud are spoken. Vengeance *wakes*;
Though men, o'erdrugged by treachery, may *sleep*,
Till to destruction hurled; nor shall the thought
That he hath triumphed, in the traitor's heart
Avail to charm the venom of her sting,
When comes the penal hour. Yet there are those,
Who but *themselves* with their own shafts destroy,
Nor taste the fruit of perfidy. And such
(O false of soul!) shall be *thy* fate, if still
I rule in Israel. But say, (if yet
A moment thou wouldst live,) what enterprise
Against our camp hath by the foe been framed?
What mean these weapons from the hostile host?
When came, and how to sudden flight were turned,
The men who bore them? Speak, for 'tis well known,
That o'er Philistia's counsels thou dost rule.
Declare each purpose of the uncircumcised;
And thus into our state infuse some cure
Of that which thou hast wrought; and if the event
Shall to thy words respond, hope yet for life.
If not, may God do so to Saul, and more,
If to the heat by day, and frost by night

Cast out, thy corse feed not each beast and fowl
That banquets on decay; that men may pause;
Ere by ambition lured, they dare put forth
Their grasp on kings! Seek not by artful speech
To hide thy deeds; for on thy path, the eyes
Of men have long kept watch."

Scarce had the king
So ended, when the Edomite his hands
Together smote; and with a look of scorn
Ineffable, and wrath commixed, thus spake:

"Hold, son of Kish! for though thy single arm
Could wield the might of all earth's kingdoms joined,
I would not hear thee more. *I false of soul?*
I traitor? King, they lie who thus my name
Attaint. Show me the man. Rehearse the proofs:
Nor thus by imputation dark of crime
Unknown, around my bosom cast a cloud,
That fits not innocence."

Thus with high words
Of feigned confidence, the Edomite
Made answer, though by terror inly racked.

To whom the king: "Traitor confess thy deeds;
Or by the power that hates thy perfidy,
Thou diest."

Then Doeg: "King, thou art deceived.
Thy words are mysteries. I will not lie
Against myself. Strike, then; and live in fear
Hereafter; for the state of kings doth shake,
When true men perish by the false o'erthrown.
Some foe to Israel upon thy heart
Doth work."

To whom (incensed) the son of Kish:
"Peace, traitor, ere I bid them by the roots
Tear out thy daring tongue. Know that thy prince
And peerless Abner, thine intent have scanned,
Though by a veil of semblance fair, and words
And acts of fraud, concealed, more mazy far,
Than ever wreathèd shell in ocean's lap
Was born. Hath not thy course in yonder camp
Been marked? And hath not Jesse's son, declared
The loyal purpose by his breast conceived,
From which, (but that thy traitorous voice prevailed
O'er fierce Philistia's lords,) deliverance

Had sprung? Where is the force in ambush set
For Jonathan? Who (but, that heavenly aid
Conveyed him from thy toils,) had led the train
With embassy of peace to Maoch's son,
By thee proposed and thus, (O ghastly thought!)
This day had groaned in bonds. All is unveiled.
Abiathar hath on thy steps kept watch;
And, taught by those thou trustest, to *surmise*
Hath demonstration given. Thy every breath
(Ingrate!) doth breed destruction for his house,
Who bade thee rise from nothing. Yet, once more,
Thy monarch proffers life, if for long years
Of treachery, thou shalt accord one hour
Of truth to Israel. Disclose the thoughts
Of Achish. Say, why came and fled the band
That late approached our camp. Give me to trace
Philistia's inmost counsels. Tempt my wrath
No more, if thou wouldst view yon sun which now
Doth climb the Eastern sky, sink toward the West."

So spake the Hebrew monarch, and his words
Upon the guilty soul of Doeg rushed
Like that avenging storm of hail and fire
In wondrous union joined, which smote the plains

Of Mizraim, what time her maddened king
Durst with Omnipotence contend. Yet more
For his ambition foiled, he grieved, which (like
Some beast insatiable of blood, that hears
At night the bleeting flock by Arab's tents
Environed) panted for the untasted prey,
Than ought of bonds, or death, or torture recked.
For him, life shone not, whilst another's will
Against his own prevailed. Above all power
In Israel, he deemed himself upraised
By force innate of soul, and from that thought
Drew firm resolve to tread resistance down,
Or sink in instant ruin. O'er the heart
Of Saul he trusted to retwine the web
Which reason late had pierced; and thus his speech
With guileful tongue he formed;

"O, bitter fruit
Of uncorrupted faith! Henceforth, let those
Who guard the thrones of kings be as the cloud
That roams the inconstant gale; and bid the breath
Of things direct their varying course; for not
The noblest nature by this mortal mould
Inwrapt, may scorn the power of envy's lip,

Which still against the true of heart makes war.
That arm is raised to slay; yet, ere it fall,
Ere guiltless blood shall stain that conquering spear;
O! if illusion to the human breast
May speak with reason's voice, and if swift deeds
To cureless ills may grow, bear with me, King,
A moment yet, lest vain remorse should point
Hereafter at this hour. Thou art deceived.
I speak not of the prince; *his* mighty soul
Is of thine own the mirror: Nor of him
Who rules our armies, speak I now; the son
Of Ner should still be true, though boundless trust
May oft engender fraud; for by its shade,
From keen observance canopied, men dare
Beyond the reach of hope, if scrutiny
Around their footsteps hung; and, therefore, kings
Who on the deeds of vassals will not look,
May foster traitors. From the priest who serves
The son of Jesse, comes to me the voice
Of accusation: nor did spring e'er cast
Its waters into day by force more strong
Of nature, than doth this Abiathar
Thus seek to pull me down. Fell not his house
At Ramah by *my* hand? and can the thought

Be from his breast expunged, that I alone
Revealed the treason of Ahimelech?
And must I fall because my mortal foe,
Declares me with Philistia leagued? What proof,
What veriest glimmer of attesting light
Upon his words doth shine? Why, Jesse's son
Hath said, that for the weal of Israel
He sought Philistia's tents. But are the tongues
Of traitors wont against themselves to move?
Did this same shepherd to the prince disclose
His purpose, when to Nob he fled? Full well
I ween, the man, who now is grown so clear
Of speech, could then involve in darkest mist
His path, till counselled by Ahimelech,
And armed, and of a bandit train the chief,
And by the eternal strength of Nature's bars
Inwrapt, he showed in peace the image dire
Of war; and o'er our state hung like a cloud,
Which (nor in storm dissolved, nor by the blast
Of Heaven to distance wafted,) veils the sky
In gloom prophetic. Yet when he who thus
Hath scorned thy power, and with beleaguerment
Of expectation dark, thy soul inthralled
At will; when *he* shall deign to manifest

The scope of his intent, his king must catch
With grateful ear the tale, and by the past
Untaught, must yield him to a rebel's voice,
And with his foeman league. But by the men
I *trust* (it seems) my guilt hath been confirmed.
Where are they? If within these tents they walk,
Bid them appear, and with united voice
Of condemnation speak. But haply they
Who in *Philistia's* camp my treason aid,
Are they whom I should fear: haply the chiefs
Of Gath, and Ekron, and of Ashkelon,
Who from their sires have caught the quenchless flame
Of hate to Israel, *their* lips, perchance,
Have to the priest my treachery made known;
And thus have dashed the succour of my fraud
From their own cause. O, wondrous faith, by foes
Implacable to foes conserved! Nay, King;
This is no common madness, and if thus,
Reproach unproved shall slay, then innocence
Lies like a leaf upon some mountain peak,
Protectionless beneath the audacious breath,
That first would sweep it to obscurity.
It is, indeed, most true that in the host
Of Achish there are those with whom my voice

Hath power; and thus, I with the enemies
Of Israel commune: whence to thine ear
Oft are the secrets of the king of Gath
By me unfolded. But can mortal sense
(Through space diffused) with distant things discourse
With range illimitable? from these heights,
Can I behold each thought that through the breast
Of Achish rolls? If not, why stand I thus
Within the darkness of suspicion's scowl,
Because a band of the uncircumcised
Hath late approached our tents? Have I not heard
Philistia's chiefs protest, that Maoch's son
Had so to David rendered up himself,
That by his single voice almost, the war
Was swayed? And is it strange that sudden acts,
To me unknown, from such conjunctions spring,
Of foes with traitors? From the mountain cleft
Where now we stand, I marked the hostile force.
Straight to the shade of the disparted rock,
I bent, and unperceived, beheld their course.
Up from the plain they climbed; and now the alarm
I raised, whilst from our tents a cry arose;
When as by panic struck the uncircumcised
To flight were turned, and from their hands some cast

Their spears. Thou know'st the rest. But in what hope
They thus approached our camp, if to surprise
A straggling prey, or lure our army forth
To where some ambush lies, or by the help
Upheld of some within thy host, (who like
The son of Ner by David are deceived;)
If, for this cause, or by some other led,
They came, as thou dost live this day, O King,
I know not. Nor of that secreted band,
Which (as thou say'st) late for our matchless prince
Was ambushed, know I ought; though well this deed
Doth with the foul conspiracy accord,
Which yesterday I did to thee reveal,
And which my utmost speed did scarce avail
To crush; for longer had the strife endured
That shook our evening council, from the camp
Of Achish, David had led forth his band
For his grand enterprise; and though repulse,
Perchance, had marred his hope, yet he had crossed
His path, on whom alone in Israel
Thy mighty soul is stamped. But wherefore thus
Speak I to him who deems me false? I plead
No longer like a guilty thing. If still
Thou dost mistrust me, strike; but from thy heart

Let not my counsel pass. Bid to thy camp
This shepherd, who, in arms, and from the dread
Of retribution fenced, so fairly talks
Of faith. Let him return, and to his king
Self rendered up, from more than dubious deeds,
Through declaration bold by proof confirmed,
Purge off suspicion's taint; so shall the true
Be from the false discerned. A moment yet
I crave thy patience, monarch. Hold thy power
Prepared against to-morrow; for the dawn
Will see Philistia's host on yonder plain
Embattled, and shouldst thou the fight decline,
The son of Maoch will with steel and fire
Begird thy camp, and in one dreadful day
Decide the doubtful war. If thou art wise,
Believe my words. My life is in thy hand."

So spake the Edomite, by fraudful words
Darkness with light confounding; whilst the power
Which since the grand revolt, bears rule on earth,
(Save where the breath hath been, which Buzi's son
Once in that mystic valley from the winds
Of Heaven invoked,) upon the heart of Saul
Illusive whispers breathed. Yet on his ear

The voice of Abner and of Jonathan
Oppressive hung. Awhile in strife he stood
Of self against himself, unspeakable.
Now wakes the image fair of happier hours,
And Doeg's form looks like a loathsome thing;
And now the thought of Jesse's outraged son
Breeds horror mixed with hate. Again he hears
The song of Israel's maids, again beholds
His spear in fury impotent thrice hurled
At him, who, by the arm invisible
Of Heaven upheld, with inextinguished might
Ten thousand trophies from Philistia reft.
But most, those final words which told the will
Of Achish, on the morrow to abide
The chance of battle, on the son of Kish
Wrought with afflicting power, scarce less than that,
Which shook more late the breast of Babel's king,
What time upon the feast, came forth the doom
By hand celestial writ. To-morrow's dawn—
Yes, ere the sun shall set, and rise, and set
Once more, must be o'erleaped perforce the gulf
Of hazard imminent; whilst from the past,
The boding token of the mantle rent
In Gilgal, like the simoom's withering breath,

Upon his bosom fell. Mute is the voice
Oracular, which from prophetic trance,
Or Heaven-sent dream, or from that wondrous robe
Pontifical, around the path of Saul
Erst shed ethereal light. One only hope
Yet o'er his darkness threw a twilight beam,
And of this hope the Edomite was lord;
For he alone a practiser had found
Of that unhallowed art, which, (by the will
Of the Eternal,) with the nether world,
Could once communion hold. Above all doubt
This thought prevailed, as thus the son of Kish
Replied:

"How are the feet of kings, than his
More girt by peril, who in darkness treads
Upon some unknown steep! for on *his* path,
No light delusive shines, whilst monarch's shut
From the fair beam of truth, amid the tongues
Of fraud must walk upon their giddy height,
Nor scarcely dare on demonstration's self
To prop their steps. Doeg, there are, who *still*
Perchance would doubt thy faith, but to *my* thought,
Thy words rebuke suspicion. For the rest,

I am of hasty speech, and this sad time,
With war and faction sick, doth from the hand
Of reason, oft unrein my ardent soul.
Lose we no more the fleeting hour, but say,
If yet the hope of revelation stands
From those who with the dead commune."

He ceased.

And Doeg thus, with confidence renewed:

"I do beseech thee, King, more deeply search
Thy breast; for if one fibre of mistrust
Be twined with thy belief, I will proceed
No further. Twice since yester sun arose,
Have I endured thy frown, and almost sunk
Beneath suspicion, baseless as the dream
Of infancy. Yet not for this I grieve.
'Tis not this drinking in, and giving forth
Of the soft air, nor yet the wondrous throb
Of inward motion, not the ceaseless round
Of waking, slumber, fulness, appetite,
Nor all the countless play of agencies
Unseen, which chain intelligence to dust;
'Tis not in these, that he existence feels

Who walks with truth, nor can the bended brow
Of kings (though from that dreadful bow descend
Destruction's arrows,) shake him from himself,
Nor stop the flow of the balsamic fount,
Within his bosom springing. For myself,
I grieve not then that thou hast held me false;
But for thy state, by vacillation tossed
Through counsels opposite, when firmest hand
May scarce against the peril of our time,
Successful warfare make. Here let me fall,
Or bid me to thy folds again, if still
Thou dost suspect my faith; and may thy foot
To-morrow on Philistia's thousands tread.
But if thou deem me true, renounce *their* words
Who call me traitor. Doubt at least no more,
For worse resolve, by execution prompt
To its fulfilment bound, (be sure) oft speeds,
Where wisest purpose, by conjecture's voice
Inlabyrinthed, and from its proper aim
Held back, hath failed beyond the reach of cure."

He ended; and with front serene, thus Saul:
" 'Tis well. My resolution, on thy words
Hath fed itself to constancy. Say on,

For from this hour, his tongue against himself
Shall move, who dares with accusation's breath
Pollute thy counsels."

Then the Edomite:
"Enough.—Thou art not lost. Yet, ere I speak
The rest, I do adjure thee by the power
Whom most thou dread'st, say, if to mortal ear,
Thou hast unfolded ought of that which now
Doth claim our thoughts."

To whom the son of Kish:
"If to the bottom of that briny flood,
Far toward the setting sun stretched out, the eye
Of man hath reached, and scanned the mysteries
In darkness wrapt, then to the secret hope
Which thou alone hast kindled, other thought
Than thine hath pierced. If not, may I lie cold
To-morrow by the uncircumcisèd arm
Oppressed, if I to man have whispered ought
Touching the workers with familiar sprites.
And by the power, I swear, whom most I dread,
That none save thee, this counsel shall partake;
No, not mine eldest born."

Then Doeg thus:
"Monarch, I ask no more. I have obeyed
Thy will. Know that at Endor, there is found
A woman of rare skill, who with the world
Of essences unbodied doth commune.
No common toil (believe me) might suffice
To find *her* dwelling, who, (if strictest search
Be not deceived,) alone in all the land,
(Or urged by want, or by the secret force
Of nature, lured to wisdom mystical,)
Yet dares this art, so well hath sped thy work
Of extirpation. To her haunt, when night
Shall veil the world, and drowse the meddling eye
Of observation, will I guide thee, wrapt
In deep disguise: so, haply, shall we mock
Her more than vigilance. 'Twere fit we leave
The camp at set of sun."

To whom with joy
Thus Saul: "Now as I live, untold rewards
Shall pay this matchless service. Sink, bright sun,
And to the countless fires which still pursue
Thy course with bootless but unwearied speed,
Give up yon concave, that the buried seer

May speak once more, and bid my spirit leap
The gulf of time, and snatch at once, the joy
Or woe that waits us. Doeg, till this night
This dreadful night shall come, be thou with me.
Yet no, I will in solitude expect
The hour. I'll to my tent. And lo, where walks
Our kingdom's second hope: he shall receive
My will touching the conduct of this day."

He ceased, and from the rock descending, thus
Bespake the prince: "Ishui, from the plain
Bid haste the skirmishers. With nicest care
Let each the murdering power of spear and brand
Renew. Firm be the thong that to each arm
The bossy shield must bind. Be tried each cord,
Which from afar shall urge the rushing stone,
Or feathered shaft; and be each quiver stored,
Till swiftest motion shall awake no clank
Of arrows; for 'tis known, that Maoch's son
For final battle, will to-morrow lead
His army forth; nor shall I so decline
To end the dubious war. At set of sun,
I to an aged seer must haste, who dwells
So shut from human communing, that scarce

He to my strong entreaty, grants to night
To meet me and two more: Thus light divine
Shall once again upon our path be shed.
Till then I seek repose. Within thy heart,
Lay up this secret, till the twilight hour;
Nor *then* impart it, save to those who share
Our most important counsels. For the ear
Of common men, methinks it were too full
Of agitation. Let us to my tent;
There will I farther talk with thee."

He said
And passed into the Hebrew camp. Meanwhile,
(Deceived by Albrok,) Jonathan had sought
His sire upon the plain, and now by doubt
And dark misgivings tossed, he toward the host
Of Israel returned, when at his side,
Ishui stood, and thus the eldest born
Of Saul bespake:

"My brother, to the camp
O haste, and with nice care thy arms review.
Prove well the string that from thy wasting bow
The shaft impels, and be thy quiver stored,

Till noiseless from thy girdle it shall hang
In swiftest course. Feed with thy sword and spear
The biting file, and in thine armour, close
Each rent of foeman's weapons; for the dawn,
Must in array behold Philistia's power
Against our tribes for final conflict set.—
So speaks our sire."

To whom thus Jonathan:
"When came these tidings? Where's the king?
Three hours
The day hath scarcely waned, since in his tent,
I did confer with him, nor ought of this
Spake he."

To whom in wrath, Ishui thus:
"How long (O proud of spirit) shall thy scorn
Flow like a mountain stream? What though by *thee*
The garrison in Geba fell? What though
Jehovah by *thine* arm, Philistia quelled
At Michmash? Must the things that touch our state,
To none but *thee*, and *Abner* be revealed?
Still must the faith of all who look with doubt
On Jesse's son, by thee be questioned? Know,

That other hearts than *thine* may of men's deeds
Take note, and haply read no less than *thine*,
Their purposes. Howe'er this be, to-day,
My voice, (by his behest who rules our tribes,)
Directs the camp. The king within his tent
Reposes, nor shall e'en *thy* daring foot
Approach his solitude. If yet thou doubt'st,
Go try the guards who heard him make me lord
This day of them, and thee? Then Jonathan:

"Brother, thou wrong'st me: By the power above,
Most deeply wrong'st me, and upon thyself
Dost strong delusion bind. My very soul
Is sick. Bear witness to one act of pride,
Which to thine accusation truth may lend.
Be David true or false, as soon or late
Shall be by time declared; but for ourselves,
O if indeed to-morrow's sun must bring
The final battle, let us not consume
This fleeting day in strife. I crave not power.
Rule thou the camp, and may the immortal King
Thy counsels bless."

He ended, and in mood

More calm, Ishui spake, then to the tents
Returned, whilst Jonathan upon the plain
In self communion stood.

"All is not well
(He thought;) my brother in the camp commands,
And he affects the traitor. In his face,
Is that which doth with confidence contend.
I, from the tent of Saul shut out who late——
Away! away! Let swift accomplishment
Of his command, touching the Edomite,
Make vacillation vain. A Hebrew comes,
He shall assist my purpose. 'Tis the son
Of Ner. Why sinks my heart at his approach?
His eye on me is fixed, he checks his speed,
He stands, and toward the host of Israel
His backward glance he throws. He nearer comes,
His look is herald of his tongue, and grief
Unspoken, fills my soul."

So mused the son
Of Saul, whilst Abner came, and thoughts of grief
Thus first expressed. "O! prince, our hope is lost:
And like some blossom, by the tempest snatched

Ere in its form the touch of beam and shower
Wakes generation, from our monarch's heart,
Too soon, by breath perfidious hath been swept
The bright resolve, which to our state had given
Swift cure. On yonder field long time I sought
The King, whom that strange panic from the camp
Had summoned forth; and now in wildered mood,
I, toward our tents returning, Nathan met,
Who with these words, infection of his woe,
Did through my spirit pour: 'Thou seek'st the King.
Abner, thou seek'st in vain: The traitor's lip
Again hath moved, and o'er his darkened soul,
As erst, bears sway. I saw, on yonder rock
When stood our ruler with the Edomite
In conference, whence expectation sad
Was in my breast engendered. From the height
The King descended, when (as thither drawn
By some malignant power that with the house
Of Saul makes war) Ishui, he o'er whom
The tongue of Doeg all too strongly works,
The son of Kish encountered. To the camp
Both passed; I followed straight, and there, from one
Who guards the royal tent, most surely learned,
That o'er our monarch's heart, the Edomite

Hath twined himself again. Seek Jonathan,
If haply yet he may devise some cure
For this distempered time. Tell him withal,
'Tis said to-morrow's sun will bring the doom
Of final battle, say, that in the camp
Ishui rules, and that the Edomite
Is ranged with those who guard the monarch's tent.'"

So spake the son of Ner, and Jonathan
Upon the orb of day (which in mid heaven
Now shone) in speechless anguish looked. Three times,
Misshapen thoughts (like his, who treads the world
That opens to man's sleep) broke from his lips.

"Abner, I know it well (at length he said)
It comes, the hour of vengeance on our house.
Our root is rottenness; and we but strive
Against our doom, as strives some insect form
Against the whirlwind's blast. Nor for myself
I mourn. The crowns of earth are dross; and he
Whose hand hath through unnumbered woes upheld
My steps till now, and in my spirit waked
The strong desire of things beyond this clime
Of clay and shadow, in the last dread hour,

Will not forsake, but through the clouds that hang
Upon the limit of mortality,
Will still my foot sustain. But for the thought,
That for our crime, the light of Israel
To-morrow must be quenched, and godless tongues
In blasphemy be loud, and yonder field
Be with our armies strewn; 'tis this which wrings
My breast. And for my sire, O, if in war
With the Eternal One he falls, for him,
For him my heart is desolate!"

So spake
The son of Saul, his last sad accents choked
By dire emotion, which upon his brow,
Interpretation spread of that, which words
Might not reveal. Abner in grief beheld,
And with new hope his breast to re-infuse,
Thus strove.

"Nay, prince, thou dost outrun the hour,
And dark surmise, with voice too confident,
Doth like assurance speak. What though to-day
Our purpose hath been crossed? The brave oft draw
Success from failure. Couldst thou to the King

Gain access, all might yet be ours. Come on,
O! matchless prince. Be but thyself once more.
Away. Time calls, and danger imminent
Swift remedy demands. To Nathan's tent
We will repair: his wisdom shall assist
Our hope."

He ceased; and Jonathan with words
Of approbation spake, as to the camp
Of Israel they bent their mournful steps.

END OF BOOK IV.

THE

FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Apostrophe to the folly of Israel in not extirpating the Canaanites—The evils which sprang from it—Apostrophe to Isaiah's vision of the fall of Babylon—The sun having set, Saul, accompanied by Doeg, and Albrok, proceeds to Endor—On the way, he interrogates Doeg as to the opinion entertained by the Hebrew chiefs of that expedition—Doeg answers falsely—The mood of Saul and Doeg briefly described—They reach Endor—Albrok having given Doeg some directions, goes forward to prepare for their approach to the abode of the witch—Saul's perplexity, and final resolution—He confers with Doeg—Albrok returning, they continue their course to a wood, where he gives some farther directions—They proceed—Their path is described—Edris the sorceress, whilst awaiting Saul in her cave, is agitated by doubt and fear, which however she calms at length by the remembrance of the words last spoken by her familiar spirit—Saul arrives at her cave—The witch goes to meet him—She asks his errand, which he explains—Edris at first rejects him, but at length is persuaded—Saul and his companions enter her cave—She conducts them to a chamber within the rock, and brings up Samuel—His appearance, (as seen by Edris) is described—She remembers the words spoken by her familiar spirit, and applying them to the present circumstances, is convinced, that it is Saul who is consulting her—She speaks to the king in terror, which he calms, enquiring at the same time what she saw—She replies—The agitation of Saul is described—He questions her farther, till being convinced that it is Samuel, he bows before him—The spectre confers with Saul, and having with great minuteness revealed the event of the battle, vanishes—The state of Saul is described, who swoons—Edris, with his attendants, recover him—The sorceress entreats him to take refreshment—The king

refuses, and Edris resumes her solicitation, adverting to a method she had imagined of escaping his fate—Albrok seconds her entreaty, and the king consenting, Edris prepares the meal—Saul and his companions sup, and Edris (refusing to accept the gifts of divination,) conducts them to the open air—Saul departs from Endor—Doeg, alluding to the advice given by the witch, proposes to go to Achish, with terms of peace—Saul, lost in reflection, replies not—Doeg again urges his plan, which the king at length rejects, resolving to abide the battle—They continue their course, Doeg, separating himself by a stratagem from the king, repairs to the Philistine camp—His reflections—He finds Achish in council, and relates the prophecy at Endor, urging Achish to the war—The Philistine king approves, confirming his promises to Doeg, and preparations are commenced.

This Book occupies the third night. The scene is sometimes on the open plain, sometimes in the cave at Endor, sometimes in its immediate vicinity, and lastly in the Philistine camp.

BOOK V.

All too presageful (Bochim,) on thy plain,
Arose that lamentation loud, what time
Chid the rebuking angel for the doom
Of heavenly justice on Canaan's sons
Not wholly wreaked. For from that race accursed,
Was spread the foul contagion of revolt
From the Eternal Spirit. Hence, the waste
Of Gentile desolation, oft the fields
Of Israel profaned, till in some breast,
By grace supernal touched, awoke the glow
Whence renovation came. And hence, on him,
Around whose locks, first of the Heaven-taught seed,
The kingly circle blazed, fell the sad hour,
When for the spoil of Amalek, he scorned
Jehovah's word. Then came the dire decree,
Forth like the bolt of Heaven, upon the house
Of Saul. Then first, upon his bosom, rushed

The torturing spirit, and a locust train
Of passions dark, through all his nature poured
Swift ruin; till from heavenly light shut out,
By inward terror racked, he helpless stood
Upon that awful brink, where now my song
Makes pause.

O! would that in this heart could wake
Some touch of that dark horror, which erst fell
On Amo's son, when in prophetic watch
He stood and drank the vision of deep woe,
Which Babel's fall declared. If haply thus,
In more befitting strains, I might essay
My mournful argument, and tell of griefs
On earth scarce matched, since first upon that bliss
New born of sovereign love in Eden's bower,
The grand destroyer rushed.

The day is past
From Palestina's shore, and earth and sky
Are still: save where by fits, in air or shade,
The rustling wing, or stealthy foot, betrays
The path of shape nocturnal. On the plain
Who swiftly rides, his mantle closely wrapped

About his form, on which such kingly port
Is stampt? 'Tis Saul,—nor unattended went
The Hebrew king; for at his side was he
By whom the priests of Israel were slain,
And with him Albrok. Each right onward looked,
And long in silence rode they; till the son
Of Kish brief converse with the Edomite
Thus held.

"Doeg, how bear they at the camp
Our going forth?" "Monarch, the prince's words
Touching the lonely seer, beget in those
With whom I of this matter spake, strong hope
Of light divine, and much thy providence
For Israel all praise." "And Jonathan?"
"The prince approves, and to the power supreme
Commends thy steps."

So spake with lying words
The Edomite; whilst Saul to that high plain
Where watched the beaming children of the night,
His eyes upraised, and by their westward course
Beheld the lapse of time. Pale were his lips,
That since the sun arose which last had set,

Were foodless; for our spirit hath strong power
Above the grosser nature, and the thrill
Alike of joy or woe, o'ermasters oft
The sense of that swift ravage, which the play
Of life still makes in the corporeal world
That girds its essence. From the glance of Saul,
Doeg recoiled, as on his brow, the torch
That shone upon their path, its radiance cast.
For e'en that heart, (o'er which the scorn of good
Had spread the slime of deeds accursed, and quenched
Almost in darkness the celestial ray,
Which yet survives the wreck in Eden made,)
Might not endure the image of the waste,
Himself had wrought.

But hark! What sound is that?
Why starts the King? Hath not the owlet left
Her eyry? No. Again it comes. That voice
Hath other meaning; Albrok's ear hath caught
The cry, and Doeg thus in accents low
He warned.

"List, list, it is the watch-dog's note
That round the dwelling of the sorceress

Keeps sleepless guard. We are at Endor. Quench
That torch. Stand close, and let no sound reveal
Your place, or, by my life, yon hounds will strew
This region with your limbs. I will advance;
Me well they know." He said, and onward moved;
Whilst o'er the bosom of the son of Kish,
Strange horror crept.

"The hour at length is come
(He thought) which by forbidden means, must rend
The cloud that veils the future. But can joy
From revelation flow, in Heaven's despite
Thus sought? Is not my spirit to itself
A fearful oracle? What if the power
I seek (or urged by malice, or impelled
By the Immortal King) should play me false,
And by the force of her unhallowed art,
Should drive me from myself or for the seer
Of Ramah, should call up some lying shade,
That with deceitful words shall guide my steps
To certain overthrow? What if the fiend
She rules (by the Omnipotent o'erswayed,)
Should madden me with fear, or come in flame
To scorch me into dust, or drag me bound

By dark enchantment, to some howling waste,
Or sweep me in the rushing whirlwind wrapt,
E'en to the western sea? can I not fly?
Shall I to-morrow tread the battle field
With heavier breast, because one outrage less
Hath on our sacred law been cast? Perchance,
The consummation of this deed yet stands
'Twixt me and desolation. What dark power,
Thus keeps my will at strife with reason's voice?
Yet wherefore came I hither, but to slake
The thirst that doth outlook the present hour?
And shall I from my very grasp let fall
My hope, because imagination raves
Of possible mischance? No. Come on me
What may, I will not pause, till of this art
Forbidden I make proof. Doeg, yon hounds
Still make the night to start; if he should fail
To calm their rage——."

To whom the Edomite:
"O, monarch, fear it not; courage in him,
Touching this act, not more from nature springs
Than from experiment. E'en now their howl
Grows faint, he will return anon. Hist, hist.

There is a dumb vibration on the plain,
As by the treading of his ass, awaked.
'Tis he."

So Doeg spake. And Albrok soon
Was through the gloom descried, who to the King
Thus brief announcement made:

"The watch-dogs threat
No more. The witch awaits us. Let us haste."

He ended. And in silence, where he led,
The other twain moved on, till to a wood
They came, when Albrok thus his speech renewed:
"Monarch, 'twere fit that we on foot pursue
The mazy path that waits our further course;
And once again (as in this enterprize
Thou wouldst not fail) I warn thee, let nor word,
Nor lightest act, from thy disguise put forth
A glimmer, that may lure suspicion's eye
To scan thee closely; for by yonder stars
I swear, that scarcely *thus* she will endure
Our coming. Bend thy head; and let thy gait
Be that of men by toil and age oppressed;

Mean toil, and age in lowest purposes"
Consumed; for should the majesty that lights
Thy form, unclouded shine, thou wouldst outstretch
In vain for divination, the bright wedge
From Ophir brought; so dark a dread of thee,
On all who with familiar spirits work,
Doth hang."

To whom the son of Kish: "Enough—
I will not slight thy words, lead on."

As thus
He spake, an inlet to the unpractised eye
Invisible, gave entrance to that shade,
Where plants of frailest growth, that unpropped stand,
Or round some hardier stem, for succour, twine
The numberless caress, with forms unbent,
And tendril arms in bright disorder spread,
Witnessed how seldom human foot had pressed
That path, to which no ray that earthward comes
From star or planet, pierced through wreathèd boughs
Scarce pervious to the burning eye of noon,
When most our sphere in her elliptic track,
Doth shun the fount of day. Onward they passed

Through ways perplexed as e'er in Creta sprang
From Dædalean art, whilst from their steps,
Full a many thing of night started amazed.
At length the plain is won; and by the light
From the ethereal orbs, is dimly seen
A region for his dwelling mete, who lives
The life of shepherds. Here and there, the voice
Of folded flocks, into the heart of Saul
Poured symphony, that spake of times long passed,
Ere yet upon the Heaven-directed search
He left his sire. O how unlike that course
On which the dawn of light celestial broke,
To the unhallowed path which now he trod,
By woe and darkness girt! A feeble ray
Hath fixed his wildered gaze, when Albrok thus
Bespake the Hebrew king:

"Seest thou yon beam?
The sorceress is faithful, who hath placed
A lamp to guide our footsteps. Haste we on;
For should we pass the hour that midway stands
In gloom nocturnal, vainly were we forth
To-night."

So speaking, with redoubled speed,
The Arab strode the plain, and on his track
The son of Kish in silence moved. Meanwhile,
Within a rock, in which the imprisoned force
Of flood, or fire volcanic, had rent out
An excavation vast, the sorceress
In dire communion sat with thoughts, which thus
Against each other strove with questionings
That bred no calm of doubt.

"I do mistrust
My sense. What though the Arab is well known?
He may deceive. Who are the other twain?
Spies haply, from the bloody king who erst
Such havoc with my race hath made. By earth
And the resplendent sun, I like it not.
Men are not wont in *companies* to seek
My haunt. Why did I teach the way that threads
Yon labyrinthine shade? What said the power
When late, upon the flood bituminous,
He stood, and spake with me? Did not his words
Engender resolution to forbear
The further practice of my art? Now things
Of day are to their living death consigned

And to their darkling life awake the forms
Nocturnal: 'tis my hour; I will invoke
My spirit, and compel him to declare
What shall betide. But hark! A step, a step.——
Alas, it is too late! They come. My heart
Is sick. Yet, no, I will not to myself
Be traitor. Edris hath not walked thus long,
In high communion with immortal powers,
To quail s[illegible]ly from a thing of clay.
Till from his grave shall start the buried seer,
Who erst at Ramah taught the favoured race,
And in my lonely cave, the future pour
Upon the trembling sense; till from the weak,
The strong shall seek for aid, and all aghast
The hunter stand before his fear-struck prey,
I am in safety. So the phantom spake.
This danger past, I will exert no more
My art in mortal presence. At the rock
They pause. I must go forth."

By this the King
Before the cavern stood, when Albrok thrice
His palms together smote, and at the sign,
Beneath the utmost verge of that huge arch,

Appeared the sorceress, her aspect such
As when by the Asphaltine lake, she held
Communion with the fiend. A lamp she bore,
That 'mid ten thousand shapes of crystal growth,
(Which o'er the rock wide incrustation spread,)
Did multiply itself into a light,
More lustrous far, than ever on the feast
Of orient despot shone. The Hebrew king,
From that wild form recoiled, as with a glance
That seemed by meteor kindled, Edris scanned
His height majestic. O'er her bosom, passed
The flash of dark suspicion; yet no eye
Might read upon the tablet of her brow,
Her thoughts; as thus she spake:

"What seek ye here?"

As falls on some benighted one, the roar
Of distant cataract, or where the Nile
Through Nubia pours his tide, or where with shout
Ineffable, Niagara descends
From foam-clad precipice, so on the ear
Of Saul, those accents came, mournful yet sweet.
A moment, wrapt in thought he stood, ere thus
With low obeisance, he answer made.

"O thou, whose potent voice to the deep world
Which holds the dead, can pierce, I pray thee aid
Through thy familiar spirit, and bring up
From darkness, him whom I to thee shall name."

So speaking, toward the sorceress, he stretched
The gifts of divination. From the gold,
Her hand recoiled, as she him thus bespake:

"Stranger, upon thy front, I read that time
With thee hath held long converse: well thou know'st
With what incessant hate the Hebrew king
Hath extirpation made of those who hold
This art; and wherefore dost thou hunt my life?
When did I wrong thee? Look upon this brow,
And by the tracery which age hath graved
Upon its tablet, learn to twine thy snares
For others. To the tending of my flocks,
Leave me in loneliness, and come no more
To Endór."

Thus the witch. To whom the king:

"Nay, woman, hear me, and if sympathy

For mortal grief, within thy bosom dwells,
Reject me not. Philistia's haughty sons
With Israel make war; our king hath blown
The trumpet, and to-morrow's dawn ('tis said,)
Must see for battle either host arrayed,
Three valiant sons, (the glory of their tribe,)
Shed brightness round the evening of my life,
Till came the evil hour that to the war
Hath summoned them, and for their sakes, I thus
Would scan futurity. Our seers are mute,
Our priests are slain, or fled to other lands
With Jesse's son, (whose fame perchance hath reached
E'en to this solitude,) for fear of Saul,
Who once—. But wherefore on my monarch cast
Reproach? Suffice it, that on thee alone
Doth hang the hope of light, which yet may shew,
That which I would not look on. For the rest,
I swear as God doth live, who shakes the bolt
Ethereal, that for this deed, no touch
Of harm on thee shall fall. May God do so
To me, and more, if I in ought betray
Thy secret to our tribes."

So spake the son

Of Kish in accent suppliant, his words
For falsehood framed, (though shaped by truth,) and
him
The witch thus answered:

"Stranger in thy mien
Is that which nor to faith nor to mistrust
May give supremacy; yet enter now
My cave."

She ended, and the Hebrew train obeyed,
When with a gate, massive, and high,
Edris the ingress closed, and by a path
Within the living rock, the strangers led
To where a chamber (that from sun-lit sky,
Scarce caught through fissured vault, a twilight day)
Received their steps. Then first, the lonely lamp
Which on that hall sepulchral shone, revealed
The stamp of habitation rude. Now paused
The sorceress, and with a voice to which
The echo of that rock-girt solitude
Strange terror lent, thus spake:

"Whom shall I bring
Thee up?"

To whom the Hebrew king: "Bring up
Elkanah's son."

He said, and on the lips
Of Edris are the words that once could search
The unseen world. Breathless the son of Kish
Beheld, but heard not. Wanly gleamed the lamp
As by a mist involved bred from the strife
Of hope, and fear, (within his breast that raged,)
Or from the pining of his nature, worne
By fast and vigil.

Now had Syria's clime
Half swept the hemisphere of night, as ceased
The muttered spell, and from the earth uprose
What seemed a man, who long with things that draw
No growth from dust, high brotherhood had made.
'Tis won, the boon of fear is won, and he
For whom the wail was erst at Ramah raised,
Hath left the viewless clime which, far or near,
Must hold awhile the race from Adam born,
'Twixt this probation hour and final doom,
In pause of destiny, that ends the war
Of good and ill within each spirit waged
From birth to death, in peace, o'er which is hung

Rapture of bliss or woe, to which the thrill
Of utmost joy or grief that in this sphere
May shake the heart, were coldest apathy.
As where the pencil's course hath been, appears
Some shape of hues impalpable, so stood
That shadow by the sorceress alone
Descried. Upon the king, a mournful glance
He turned, whilst on the mind of Edris, came
Remembrance of the warning by the fiend
Pronounced.

"*The buried seer* from death is come
E'en to my *lonely cave*, and he of form
So regal is the son of Kish inwrapt
In deep disguise; the *hunter* he, of all
Who hold my art, and I his helpless *prey*.
His strength hath from *my weakness* succour sought,—
It must be so."

As from the wondrous tube,
Perchance of birth electrical, that drinks
With sateless thirst the ocean plain, if rent,
Sudden, immense, the briny load descends
Upon the vexed tide; so, on her breast,
That dark imagination fell, and crushed

All hope. Upon the Hebrew king a look
She cast of anguish and of wrath, commixed,
As with a voice which shook his inmost heart,
She cried.

"Ah! wherefore hast thou me deceived?
For thou art Saul."

Whom thus with trembling lips.
That scarce of thought interpretation made,
The son of Kish bespake. "Be not afraid,
Remember now my oath. What sawest thou?"

Then Edris: "From the earth I saw ascend
A shape in Godlike semblance clad."

To whom
Aghast with terror, (whilst his rolling eyes
Vain search through that vast chamber made for him
Of whom she spake,) the son of Kish replied:
"Who? Where? I see him not. What power my sense
Beclouds? Yon lamp burns dimly, or my brain
O'erwrought, doth mock the visual faculty.
Am I deceived? Woman, what is his form?"

So spake the king; his accents half in thoughts
Distempered lost, and half pronounced, by pause
Oft intervall'd. So, when the restless gale
Plays with some far off music, on the ear,
Now falls the sweet aërial wave, and now
Expires, to distance swept. The sorceress
His perturbation (not unpitying) viewed,
And with prompt words thus spake:

"An aged man
He seems, of awful aspect; from the earth,
Mist-like he rises, and around him flow
A mantle's folds."

She said. And at her words,
Instant upon the king, conviction rushed
Unneeding attestation of the sense
Corporeal. In his soul, the present seer
He felt; and toward the spot whereon the witch
Her gifted gaze had fixed, he bowed him low.

To whom the phantom. "Saul, upon my rest
Why hast thou broken thus, to bring me up?"

As when in times long past, from demon's voice,
Or human fraud with demon malice leagued,
(Though of that league unwitting,) came the rhyme
Oracular, or from the Delphic rock,
Or from Dodona's forests, or where else
In Libya's desert, or by Nilus' stream,
By Heaven's high sufferance, the infernal power
Most reigned; so from that shadow's lips, (through which
The lamp beam uneclipsèd shone,) those words
From source unseen, upon the Hebrew king
Fell mournful. Well that solemn tone revealed
Elkanah's son; such were his accents, mixed
Of wrath and pity, when on Gilgal's plain
He chid for Amalek not wholly crushed.
The son of Kish in terror heard, yet roused
His spirit's utmost force, as with these words
He answer made.

"My heart with deep distress
Is riven. Philistia doth on me make war.
God is departed from me, nor by dream,
Nor voice of seer, illumination more
Vouchsafes; and, therefore, have I thee invoked,

That in this hour of utter helplessness,
Thou might'st direct my steps."

So spake the King
Of Israel, in accent passionate
As e'er from mortal heart broke forth, when most
By love, or hope, or fear, or other force
That deepest shakes our nature, swayed. And thus
The shadow all unmoved, replied:

"Why then
Hast thou revoked my spirit to this clime,
To ask of *me*, if of His strength bereft,
Whose arm omnipotent that erst sustained
Thy goings forth, is now thy foe? Can *I*
His word reverse, who from thy grasp hath rent
The kingdom over Israel? Thyself
Thy changeless doom hast fixed. Remember *him*,
The king of Amalek. Think of the spoil,
In foul rebellion 'gainst Jehovah's voice
Preserved; and hope no more; for, as I spake
On Gilgal's plain, so shall it come to pass.
Thy kingdom is departed; on the son
Of Jesse laid, by *his* behest who reigns

In might unmeasured; yea, and to the power
Of fierce Philistia will he give the host
Of Israel, with thee. And when shall sink
In night to-morrow's day, thou and thy sons
Shall be with me in death."

He said. And passed
To his allotted rest, with course more swift
Than that of beam through fields of ether, shot
From starry fires.

O! if reality
Around the sweet imagining be twined
That o'er the path of each who walks this sphere
Terrestrial, a power angelic bends
In guardian sympathy, then for thy grief,
O Saul! one breast ethereal surely mourned,
When like a sulphurous tempest from some depth
Volcanic heaved, the spectre's final words
Fell on thy soul.

As one upon whose sleep
In torrid clime, that winged monster, named
From sprite abhorred of Orient lore hath rushed,

And quaffed all night the vital stream, if waked
By force of outward things, to the quick sense
Of his undoing, feels the ebb of life
Through all his blasted frame; such, son of Kish,
Was thy awakening from that sleep unblessed,
The lethargy of soul which held thee bound
Through that long night from thine own nature cast
Around itself, beneath whose shade accursed,
The insatiate fiend, by thine own heart conceived,
Did from thy spirit suck the bloom away;
Till by those words of fear aroused, thou stood'st
Amid the glare of truth, which but revealed
Thy succourless distress. And such on them
Who scorn the strivings of celestial grace,
(If griefs ephemeral, faint type may yield
Of ever-torturing pains,) shall fall the hour
Whereon *he* looked, who saw the wondrous birth
Of those four creatures mystical that sprang
Darkling from-out the strife of winds that shook
The briny deep; that hour, which into day
Supernal, (by this crust of mortal mould
Warded no more) shall drag the guilty forth,
And on the ruthless plague, beneath whose waste
They reckless slept their life away, shall pour

Insufferable light. "Help for the King!
He swoons." Thus Edris spake, as where o'erwhelmed
By that prediction dire, and, by the war
On nature waged so long, the son of Kish
On the bare earth lay stretched, she pitying hied;
Nor at her call, the Edomite delayed,
Nor Albrok, though on both dark horror sat.
His hands they chafed, and with reviving touch
Of water, to his brow revoked the tint
Of life; when thus the witch, with soothing words,
Began:

"Since, in obedience to thy voice,
In peril's spite, thy handmaid hath essayed
This task of issue dolorous, let now
Her supplication sway thee. Calm thy grief,
And with refection such as simplest board
May yield, renew thy strength, that in the course
Which yet before thee lies, thou mayst not faint."

To whom (whilst from his breast there burst a groan,
As deep as ever tortured nature shakes,
When from this clay intelligence departs)
Thus Saul. "No more! I will not eat, nor feed

My body for the vulture's maw. Away!
Why have ye roused me? I was with the dead.
Yet no. Whence came the spectre? Death is birth
To other *life*, transmission of our being
Through that which but rejects the stiffened dust,
To sense of weal or woe, perchance more keen
Than clay-girt spirits reck of. Let us hence."

He ceased, and from the earth uprose in act
Of swift departure, when the sorceress
Solicitation prompt resumed.

"Nay, King,
It must not be. Now, by the oath of peace
Betwixt us twain, I pray, if in thy sight
I have found favour, quit not thus my cave;
For in thy face is that which doth declare
Long abstinence; and ere thou canst attain
The Hebrew camp, almost the hours must pass,
Which part the dawn from mid-night. Stay thee then,
I do intreat thee, monarch, and by force
Of food, and generous wine, renew thy powers
Corporeal; whence by sympathy thy heart
Shall glow with hopes forgotten. Time is yet

Thine own, and he confederation makes
With grief, who on a future woe so looks,
That of the present calm, (haply replete
With cure,) he takes no note. Bethink thee, King,
Might not the fight be shunned? Philistia's lords
By many a day of slaughter, all too well
Have learned the doubtfulness of war, to scorn
A treaty with your tribes. Yield them a part
Of thy dominion for a peace, and thus
Avoid thy fate, or do whatever else
Mature deliberation shall approve."

So spake the witch, with counsel impotent,
Against *his* will who launched the rushing spheres,
Conceived; and next her, Albrok to confirm
Her voice thus strove.

"Well hath the sorceress
Advised. I do beseech thee, mighty King,
Go not unstrengthened hence; so swiftest speed
Shall make the hour grow sluggish, and prevent
With timely antidote to-morrow's woe.
Nay, monarch, fix not thus thy glance where late
The spectre stood, but rather snatch what yet

Of remedy remains. The swoony drouse
Hangs yet about him, Doeg. Woman, haste
Thy courtesy, we will attend the King."

He ended. And with broken words the son
Of Kish against their zeal repulse half urged,
Till by persuasion, and the mightier force
Of nature swayed, upon the couch he sank
In desperate apathy.

Meanwhile the witch
Sped to her task. The fatted calf hath bled,
And o'er the rock, the crackling wood hath cast
A waving radiance. Flour of wheat, with milk
She tempers next, and on the heated stone,
The manchat lies till from the mass is driven
By force of fire, each quality that most
Repels the vital energy.

At length
The cates prepared, the board she heaped, and Saul
In silence, at that joyless banquet sat;
Nor might prompt service, nor the varied turn
Of artful speech, for consolation framed,

Avail within his bosom, to relume
One flash of hope, or cloud with transient veil
The eye of thought prospective. Now the pang
Of nature was assuaged, when from the couch
The king arose, and thus the witch bespake:

"Thanks for the service of this night, though fraught
To me with black despair. From Saul henceforth,
Nor joy, nor grief, on living thing may come;
Else, would I deck for thee, the future hour
With hope of high reward. Yet take this gold.
My doom doth urge me hence. Farewell."

To whom
The sorceress. "Monarch, I know not want;
The flocks that round me graze, suffice for more
Than man's necessity, and for the rest,
The mist of age, doth to *my* sight obscure
The flash of treasure. Nor for the sad light
By me around thee shed, will I receive
Aught of thy hand. To walk in loneliness,
Rapt in high converse with the mysteries
Of earth and sky, and feel the gentle ebb
Of life, unshocked, is all that Edris asks.

Depart in peace, and may some power make false
The phantom's voice."

She ceased; and by the path
So lately trod, led forth to outer air
The Hebrew king, who from her dwelling turned
His mournful steps. Long time, upon his ear,
The dog's wild howl that to his broken watch
Returned, from distance came; and half the course
To Gilboa's hill was passed, when Doeg thus
(Nought from his purpose moved, by the dark scene
At Endor late beheld,) with words of fraud
The silence broke.

"King, if the sorceress
Hath counsel given, which brings some antidote
To that which doth for thy destruction work,
'Twere fit that ere the dawn, I seek the tents
Of Achish, and before him lay such terms
As may avail, to ward from Israel
The chance of battle: nor in feeble hope
Stand I, that we shall with Philistia's king
Prevail; if to attain high things by risk
Unthresholded, it is man's wont to shun

The higher good, 'twixt which and him the gulf
Of hazard, yawns immense. Bid me stretch out
Offer of lands. Yield to the force awhile
Of adverse things; till time, which nor to good
Nor ill, doth constancy accord, shall bring
Some cure to our afflicted state."

So spake
The Edomite. And like the scanty fires
Shot from the day star, to some northern waste
What time the tropic line that southward lies
From the Equator, feels the fervid touch
Of summer vertical, so came those words,
In languid promise dressed of remedy,
Upon the son of Kish, nor thawed the frost
That hung around his heart. His eyes from earth
He raised not, as with speech of one whose thought
But with itself communes, he answer made:

"'Tis vain. I marked the tone, 'twas he himself
That spake; and though this arm should stretch in dust
The uncircumcisèd host, sooner to life
Should start each mangled form, and grasp again
His weapons to destroy, than from its aim,

Should err Jehovah's will. Philistia's king
Celestial impulse feels, and from bright heaps
Of gold, like *hills* for our redemption piled,
Would turn in scorn. Yes, David, from the wild
Where yawns the cave in which thy conquering sword
Did o'er me lighten, yet forbore to slay,
Thy voice by the Eternal One was heard,
And thou hast triumphed. Jonathan, thy sire
Hath wrought thy fall; and on thy youthful prime,
Hath poured the winter of his destiny.
To-morrow's setting sun, to-morrow's sun,—
Our house is not."

The Hebrew monarch ceased,
By grief o'ermastered, and the Edomite
With eager utterance, (like his, on whom
Alone, prevention of some hasty ill
Is hung,) replied:—

"Now, woe to Israel,
If he, from whom whate'er of strength remains
Hath issue, shall unstricken fall, and lose
In sad expectancy, the hope that dwells
In the wide circle of experiment.

Forgive my ardour, king, and on this time
Of lethargy, thy condemnation cast.
Three hours will bring the dawn, the dawn the fight,
O'er which the presage hangs. And shall we *sleep*,
(Perchance upon the confines of our doom?)
Or worse, by pretext of forgetfulness
Unshielded, shall we *wake* to fret at woes
Unfelt, and amorous of our own decay,
Add certainty to fear? I tell thee, king,
There yet is hope. The son of Maoch wars
For conquest, not for blood; his lords are wise
As bold, nor for the uncertainty, that hangs
O'er the event of battle, will yield up
Immediate domination. Nor let thought
Touching the triumph of the uncircumcised,
Make weak thy resolution. Time hath power
To bind the loftiest soul with laws abhorred
Yet transient; for the gale moves not with course
More changeful than the range of chance; whence
springs
Endurance to the few, who (like some tree
Whose root excursive drinks in sunless depths
The vital element, whilst all above
Beneath the breath of summer's noon, expires,)

With reach intelligential, grasp remote
Felicities, and with a dawn unseen
By other men, make glad the present gloom.
Arouse thee, monarch: bid me to the camp
Of Achish with the proffered peace: concede
But for a moment that which from the power
Of the Philistine shall again be rent,
And thus avoid the war on which doth shine
Such inauspicious light. Prudence, by fate
Though from her aim oft dashed, is strong to ward
The soul against remorse, when comes the day
Of grief."

He ended, and the son of Kish
Conflicting thoughts convulsed. Now high disdain
Of Maoch's son, and fear, that for *himself*
The general mind, should deem him recreant,
Darkened his breast; and now, the boding voice
Ne'er raised in vain, all expectation crushed
Of good, unless the battle might be shunned
By doubtfulness unshadowed. Heart-oppressed,
Awhile the hope insane he scanned, that craft
Of man might with Jehovah strive, ere thus
(By deep despair from vacillation freed)
He silence broke.

"Enough. I will not yield.
Urge me no more. For though the world unseen
Hath rendered back to earth Elkanah's son
For utterance of my doom, though the behest
Of the Celestial King hath panoplied
The host of fierce Philistia from our swords;
I will not taint the setting of my sun
With craven deed, nor to the foe give up
Ought that hath called me King. Upon the breast
Of Saul comes not mutation of pale fear.
Let us make speed to Gilboa, that the dawn
Break not upon our course. My sons demand
A moment from their sire."

He added not;
For in his bosom swelled emotion high.
Closer he drew his mantle, and his ass
He onward urged; nor durst the Edomite
The conference renew. With swiftest course
Along the plain they sped, but when almost
The camp was won, Doeg, with sudden pause,
Once and again stood still. To whom, at length,
The Hebrew King:

"Doeg, what ails thy beast?
For to thyself, career more swift than ours,
Methinks were sport."

Then he: "I know not, King;
But neither chiding word, nor touch of goad,
Avails to give him speed, and in his tread,
Is that which intimation gives of hurt;
'Twere fit that I dismount, stay not thy course;
Ere day I yet shall reach the Hebrew tents.
I am in safety, and the watchfires' gleam
From Gilboa's hill, e'en now doth minister
Unerring guidance to my steps."

He said,
And stood on earth, nor did the son of Kish
Through doubtfulness delay, but toward the camp
With Albrok hied, and to Philistia's tents
(As through disparted air, upon some prey
The rushing eagle moves) the Edomite
Impetuous sped, rejoicing in the fraud
Which from the King had severed him. Unchecked
By fear of ought in earth or heaven, he swept
The darkling plain; ambition's voice alone

Upon his breast had power, and thoughts like these
Within him rose.

"The spectre hath proclaimed
The doom of son and sire, and agencies
By mortal sense ungrasped, with me are leagued.
Something too near the son of Jesse stands
To where should close the circle, that from fear
Must fence me round; but to a future hour
This ill belongs. Be it my part to bear
The divination to Philistia's camp,
And urge the son of Maoch to the fight,
Lest haply, by dismay, or by the force
Of counsel, from his bolder purpose driven,
Saul shall make trial of the antidote
By Edris proffered. Had he to my voice
But yielded, I had twined for him a snare
Which had to fate assurance twofold given;
For, by my words uproused, the king of Gath
Had ere the dawn begirt the Hebrew tents
With war, and in his dream of peace, perchance,
Oppressed the son of Kish, but yonder flash
Philistia's fires. Achish, I come with words
That shall around thee cast munition strong

Of high expectancy. Remember then
The oath betwixt us sworn, and let reward,
Such as alone will fill the appetite
Of high ambition, round my future life
A light of glory shed."

Thus through the breast
Of Doeg rolled imaginations clad
In fire corrupt, by nature bred from light
Of Heaven revolted; so from some morass,
Where weltering in decay, the tangled forms
Of plants unnumbered o'er the watery ooze
Are spread, oft springs at night the burning reek
By summer suns unbound. Swift to the camp
Of the uncircumcisèd host he rode;
And through the watch (scarce challenged) to the tent
Of Achish passed, nor sleeping found the King,
But with the bravest of his warrior band,
In secret counsel, whether with the dawn
He shall lead forth his power and force the tribes
Of Israel to battle. On the front
Of Doeg, triumph sat, as with bold words
The King he thus bespake.

"My task is done.
The seer who erst the Hebrews ruled, this night
Hath given thee victory. I heard when rose
The well-known voice, I saw the son of Kish
Convulsed with dread, when he who (by strange art,
Or virtue natural of spirit,) looks
Upon the future hour, declared the doom
Which to thy hand, the circumcisèd host
Hath given, nor shall the day that westward comes
Expire, ere on the field the King himself
Must with his sons be stretched. This dawn is *thine*;
Fate calls. Arise, nor let thy foot through doubt
Grow weak; so on the house of Saul, thy tread
Ere set of sun shall be."

Scarce had he ceased,
When plaudits loud, and promise of reward
Unmeasured, to the Edomite returned
Grateful response. Already, in the eye
Of Maoch's haughty son, the plains are red
With Hebrew blood; already Doeg grasps
Vicegerency of kingdom yet undashed
From its possessor's hand. Each in himself
Confides, nor ought of operation recks

Supernal, that with art, more wondrous far,
Than e'er within the utmost scope of dream
Alchymic came, from sin and strife of earth,
The work of wisdom draws, and bids the foes
Of good, the will of taintless good perform.

Sleep flies Philistia's camp; and tokens dire
Of carnage imminent, and words of hate,
Pollute the sacred calm, that feels not yet
The earliest glow that doth precede the dawn.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

THE

FALL OF SAUL.

BOOK VI.

NOTE PRELIMINARY.

In the description of the battle, which is the subject of this Book, the Author has ventured to give to the mode of fighting of the Hebrews and Philistines, the character of that of the ancient Greeks as described by Homer, and in so doing, he is supported by the authority of the judicious Abbe Fleury, in his excellent enquiry into the manners and customs of the ancient Israelites. The words "Or shall inflame hereafter," introduced into the simile drawn from the war in Heaven, mentioned in the Book of Revelation, allude to the view taken of this transaction by the Rev. — Burgh in his Exposition of that Book. It is to be remarked, that the sacred historian in one place says that the names of Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchishua, and afterwards when describing the loss of the battle which terminated the reign and life of Saul, the name Abinadab is substituted for Ishui, we must therefore suppose, that Saul's second son had two names.

THE ARGUMENT.

Apostrophe to Hope—Apostrophe to the Angel who blasted the host of Sennacherib, king of Assyria—Brief contrast of the characters of Hezekiah, and Saul—The subject is resumed—Night being almost spent, Saul reaches the Hebrew camp where he meets Jonathan, who repairs with the king to the royal tent—The grief of Saul is described, who at length relates to Jonathan the events of the night—The prince endeavours to console his father—Ishui and Melchishua come to the tent of Saul, who having briefly opened to them the present circumstances, dismisses

THE ARGUMENT.

Jonathan with a charge to Abner, whose perplexity is described — Jonathan enters his tent, and relates in part what had occurred, delivering withal the command of the king — Abner, after a brief conference, accompanies Jonathan to the tent of Saul, and protests to the king, his deep sympathy in his grief, and his resolution to fall with him — Saul endeavours to dissuade him from going to the battle—Abner maintains his purpose, and at length prevails—The king gives some directions for the ordering of the battle—A cry is heard without—Nathan comes to the royal tent, with tidings, that the enemy is in the field—Saul prepares for the fight— His state of mind briefly described—The Hebrew army quits the camp—Day dawns—After short suspense, both armies close—The shock is described —The acts of Saul and Jonathan, who throw the enemy into some disorder—Achish hastens to oppose them, and restores the valor of his followers—Saul meets him—Achish defies Saul, who replies —Their single combat—Saul wounds Achish, whose guards gather round him—The efforts of Saul and Jonathan, to seize the king of Gath, who is in great danger, but is at length carried off the field— His wound is cured, and he returns to the battle though unable to fight—Tamis, priest of Dagon, gives him some advice regarding the conduct of the war, which Achish accepts—The acts of Abner—Tamis encourages the Philistine prince, who commanded in the right wing, against the left of the Hebrews, where Abner fought—The priest rekindles the war, and obtains succour for the Philistine prince—Athroch, lord of Ekron, opposes Abner—The acts of the former—Abner at length meets him in single combat, and Athroch is slain — Day advances—Malchis, the Philistine, who commanded on the left wing against the Hebrews' right, is described—His conflict against Ishui and Melchishua, the latter is at length slain by Malchis—Ishui despatches a messenger to Jonathan for help—The disorder of the Hebrew centre produced by the Philistine archers is described — Saul, and Jonathan, endeavour to rally them—The rumour of the fall of Melchishua spreads through the Hebrew army—The message from Ishui is delivered—The victorious shout of the Philistines

THE ARGUMENT.

—Saul is assured that the battle is lost—The voice of Malchis is heard in pursuit of Ishui—Saul seeks his son—The disorder of the field, and the distress of the Hebrews described—Ishui is seen in extreme danger—The Philistine horsemen attack such of the Hebrews as still keep the field—Malchis slays Ishui—The grief of Saul is described—Achish encourages the horsemen, and at the suggestion of Saul's armour-bearer, he and Jonathan retreat towards the heights of Gilboa—The Philistines pursue till compelled by the nature of the ground, they dismount, and follow the Hebrews on foot—The retreat of Abner, on the loss of the battle, is described—The Hebrews are close pressed by the Philistine archers, till Jonathan being slain, Saul bids his armour-bearer kill him, and he refusing, Saul in despair falls on his sword.

This Book occupies the third day—The scene is at first in the Hebrew camp, afterwards in the field.

BOOK VI.

Hail Effluence divine, for from the vast
Of Heavenly love thy sweet nativity
Thou drawest. Immortal Hope! Thou through the reach
Of far eternity, with force untired
Against the woes from rebel natures born
Dost war; save where the doom supreme hath barred
The way to life. Nor on this blasted sphere
That serpent old did scarce his venom shed,
Ere, like to shower on parched plain distilled,
Thy visiting to that primeval pair
Who saw the wreck of their high bliss, did bring
A potent cure that half in darkness quenched
The flash of sword seraphic round the tree
Whereof we yet may taste. Nor might the day
Of gloom, what time upon the watery waste

Did float that lonely prow, avail to hush
Thy voice prophetical: nor since, from earth
Hast thou departed, but 'mid woe and crime
Hast striven. Like that lone bird which from some
shade
Pours through the live-long night his descant sweet,
Thy witching strain still broken, still renewed,
The darkest hour can charm. Not until now,
Thy presence from the king whose mournful steps
My argument invite hath been withdrawn;
But now farewell. Henceforth, bereft of thee,
My song must flow, nor may the saddest notes
With fit accord that matchless sorrow tell.

Where is the warrior angel, that with blast
Nocturnal, smote the pride of Nineveh
To dust, what time Assyria's haughty king
Durst with Jehovah war? Why stays he now
His vengeful wing, nor on Philistia's host
Stretched out immense on Palestina's plain,
Descends in wasting wrath?

O how unlike
The prince (whose prayer for Salem at that hour,

Far more than swarthy bands from Afric's clime
Outpoured, availed to crush Sennacherib,)
To him, who to the field disastrous driven,
(Which now demands my song,) unfriended stood
With not a cloud of doubt, to veil the doom
That onward swept e'en as an ocean wave,
(High as a mountain heaved,) that on some skiff
Must swift destruction pour.

. . Earth yet was wrapped
In night, when by the son of Kish the camp
Of Israel was reached. Him Jonathan
First met with cry of joy, that instant died
When on the brow he looked, which in his soul
Immediate echo waked of dark or bright,
As doth the azure concave in the breast
Of some pellucid flood. The Hebrew king
Spake not, but to his tent with gesture bade
The prince; then swiftly passed, shunning the speech
Of many a warrior who that night had kept
Sad vigil, charging still the lingering hours
With griefs *imagined*, of the *present* woe
Unconscious. For their king alone, gone forth
Scarce guarded in that time of fear, their hearts

Had throbbed, and with *his* aspect, rose once more
The star of hope; nor knew they, that the house
Of Saul was as a tree through which hath passed
The lightning's withering breath: a shape of life,
That feels no more the vital element
In tube organic, vigourless it stands
Till on its sapless form the whirlwind's blast
Shall seize.

Now in his tent the monarch stood,
By none save Jonathan beheld; his eyes
Upon the prince he fixed, in act of speech,
That broke not forth. O, might the dulcet tongues
Waked by the finger of the wandering gale,
From his own harp, in accents metrical
Discourse, that strain impassioned might express
Haply, the matchless anguish in the face
Of Saul revealed. The hand of Jonathan
He seized and dropped, and seized, as on a lamp
That from three branches poured the lustrous tide,
He looked, and with a broken sigh, thus said:

"Methinks yon light burns dim, as by the approach
Of morning quelled; How wanes the night?"

"O sire,
(Replied the prince) the sky betrays not yet
The footsteps of the dawn, which by an hour
Almost, is parted from us."

"Be it so
(Resumed the king). Haste to thy brothers. Say—
But, no. Stay thee, my son. O Jonathan,
The time *hath been*, that I upon the night
Have looked, as on a void that balked the flow
Of my impetuous soul, which for the things
Of day did crave! The morn was *then* to me,
E'en as the rending of a chain; but *now*,
Though 'twixt this moment and to-morrow's light,
Might come the intervention of the years
Thricetold, which since my earliest breath have passed,
The space were all too brief. Would thou couldst read
Untaught the secret which my tongue abhors
To tell. Wilt thou forgive when thou shalt hear,
Nor by thy voice in malediction raised,
Pour tenfold venom through the fang that rends
Thy father's heart? I have undone thee, child;
Yet call me not destroyer: on my name,
Enough of tongues shall reprobation pour.

But from the fountain of *thy* lips which still
Hath consolation o'er my wasted life
Diffused,—if from *those lips*, reproach shall flow.
I were indeed unblest. The ocean bird,
Which from the howling storm, to where the rock
The well-known cleft displays, for covert flies.
If in the fissure crouched, some reptile foe
Should at the wanderer launch his scaly form.
Another crag might to its stony breast
Receive; but from the covert of thy heart
If driven, O where shall Saul a shelter find?
Would that the sorrow which this dreadful night
To foul development hath nursed, to thee
Were known!"

He ceased by anguish wrung, and him
With tears the prince thus answered. "Sire, what grief
So rends thy bosom? O suppress the pain
Within thy soul no longer: for as night
May from observance hide impending harm,
Till remedy is vain, so silence oft
Wraps in pernicious shade from counsel's voice,
Ills that had else by sudden antidote
Been to oblivion chased: and though beyond

All cure should lie the sorrow thou deplorest,
Now by the wondrous chronicle of love
Within this spirit by thy deeds inscribed,
And by that other roll of gentlest acts
By memory ungrasped, ere yet my soul
Of its own bliss took note; by every throb
Of life, by every pain thy voice hath soothed,
And each felicity that through the play
Of sweet sensation, or emotion pure
Of intellect, upon existence waits,
Or may hereafter in celestial day
Smile on this being, from thyself derived;
By more than tongue can tell, or heart conceive
Of ceaseless good, like river strong and deep
From spring exhaustless, on my nature poured
From thy great self; deny me not, O sire,
The poor ability, (which not the rage
Of darkest grief hath reft,) to throw the clasp
Of sympathy around thy day of storm,
And stay or share thy ruin: for may God
So in the hour of utmost need my foot
Sustain, as I alike or life or death
With joy shall meet, that waits *thy* steps. O speak,
Whilst yet the chain nocturnal doth hold back

Day's perturbations. Speak, that I may pour
Refection o'er thy spirit: hope dies not
On earth."

He said, and to his bosom pressed
The son of Kish. Awhile the tide of woe
Both mingled, ere with broken words, discourse
They thus renewed.

"Haply, my son, thou know'st
Wherefore at close of day, I left the camp?"

"'Tis said, that to interrogate a seer
Who in seclusion dwells, touching the war,
Thou didst go forth."

"So was it, for the voice
Of him that spake hath long in death been hushed."

"In death been hushed, my father?"

"Ay in death;
But by the wondrous art our law condemns,
His lips have op'd again. Pressed by the gloom

Of tenfold night that on my spirit lay
I sought the aid of one who with the dead
Communes. Thou start'st. Ah! hadst thou heard when spake
The seer of Ramah.——

"How? Elkanah's son?"

"'Twas he himself. All viewless in a cave
At dead of night he stood, and uttered that
Which (heard as then upon my sense it fell)
Had through the river of thy youthful blood,
Swift congelation spread. To-morrow's dawn—
Again, again, I hear his words of fear."

"Why then, my soul hath of the future drunk;
And from Philistia's arm must fall the doom
On Gilgal's plain pronounced. But of thyself
What said the seer? Shalt thou survive the fight?
I read thy answer. Be it so. We two
Will die together. Let the Eternal King
But grant us, in our hearts to feel the force
Of that transmuting power which disentwines
From dross terrestrial, and there is hope,

Which may outlook to-morrow. One thing yet
Doth unassure my breast. Some fraud perchance,
Hath o'er thee wrought; methinks, it were not strange
If practiser of mysteries so cursed,
Should lie for gold."

"Would it *were* thus! for then
There might be peace once more. But no, his voice
Unchanged, since when from lips of flesh it came,
Forbade all doubt. Of Amalek he spake,
As on the day when Agag fell. The son
Of Jesse shall in Israel be king;
And ere to-morrow shall in night be lost,
Thou and thy brothers must with me be stretched
Upon the battle-field, by our own host
Entombed, some counselled, that by embassy
To Maoch's son, I should entreat for peace
With offer large, of land; but thus to strive
With the Omnipotent, to me seemed vain:
Yet if thou wilt, the shelter of this hope
May still be tried."

"O, sire! if by my tongue
This matter may be swayed, we shall abide

Jehovah's will, nor in a texture framed
Of earth's imaginings, from wrath divine
A shadow seek. No, let us meet in arms
The foes of Israel, and fall like men.
Nor for our country mourn we, as undone
Beyond all renovation: Heavenly watch
Is o'er the seed of Abraham; the sword
Of him by whom the hope of Gath was slain,
Shall soon to wailing turn Philistia's scorn,
And bid the son of Maoch curse the hour,
Which by the iteration of fierce deeds,
Hath waked our tribes to vengeance."

Thus with words
Of consolation, strove the son of Saul
Against the anguish of that night. The King
In silence stood, whilst in his heart, scarce flashed
A hope more faint than starry beam e'er came
From utmost distance through the fields of space,
To philosophic eye, yet in his arms
His child he strained, as if that circle frail
Might wardance yield from metaphysic force,
And make the voice celestial falsely speak.
Resplendent in his eyes, the image fair

Of virtue shone, as from the Hebrew prince
Those accents fell, with hope immortal fraught;
And might the Heaven-born nature, by the pulse
Of sense, from soul to soul its essence bright
Transfuse, (as from the loadstone instant spreads
By lightest touch infection of itself
Through mass metallic,) Saul that hour had felt
A change more bright, than e'er on clime of earth,
With beam or shower descends, in that sweet time,
When first from vernal skies the effluence breaks,
That rends the chain of winter.

O, could he
Who madly from the visitings of Heaven
His spirit wraps, till spreads the root accursed
By our grand foe erst planted, in wild growth
Through all his festering nature; could he feel
The pang which oft (ere from this mansion frail
The tortured spirit parts,) with foretaste dire,
Outstrips the award supernal, wisdom's voice,
(Though like a watchman strong, from age to age,
She sleepless cries,) would all too languid seem.
Such was the grief that rent the son of Kish
As on the neck of Jonathan he hung.

"If in the feelings of the mind," (at length
He said,) "men might invest themselves at will;
Or were it given in virtues not our own,
To mantle up our guilt, thy words to hope
Might change the desolation of this night:
But on the threshold of my heart there stands
A warder stern, who at thy pleading laughs
In scorn; nor may the nurture of long years,
On which the dark distemper of my soul
Hath fed itself to domination wide,
Be from its tendency disjoined, and yield
To the compunction of an hour. What voice
Is that without the tent? They are my sons
Who call, 'tis well, day westward comes with speed."

Whilst thus he spake, the princes twain who next
To Jonathan the house of Saul upheld,
Before the monarch stood. As on his brow
Who from a plain by summer tropical
Illumed, some cavern enters, where from earth
First springs a fountain cold, an icy dew
Is cast, so from that front of hope bereft,
Deep to those princes' hearts, a chill was flung

That to the interrogation almost gave
Respondence sad, which thus Ishui made:

"Sire, if unbidden, we thy presence seek,
Haply, the crisis dark which o'er us works,
Shall win thy pardon. Thrice the crested seer
Of night hath with high note his presage sung
Of dawn, with sounds of life the tents are stirred,
Yet is the answer of the man of God,
Touching the war, to us unknown. O! speak,
If from thy face a divination sad
Hath not already to our inmost hearts
Been breathed."

He ended, and in close embrac
The King the princes pressed, ere in these words,
With sighs commixed, his tale of grief he told.

"Children, our house is fallen, by His decree
Who reigns in earth and heaven. To-morrow's fight
Is lost ere fought, nor to the future hour
May we for healing of this sorrow look.
Haste, Jonathan, to where is spread the tent
Of mighty Abner. Let him send with speed

To Gibeah, one who may these tidings bear;
Bid him withal unto my tent. Return
Thou with him hither. Stay ye yet awhile,
Ishui, and Melchishua, and hear
The end."

He ceased, and to the son of Ner
The prince him hied, nor found the warrior stretched
In rest inglorious. Through his bosom rolled
Imaginations sad. The war in thought
He scanned, by dereliction manifest
Of heavenly succour marked to Israel.
The house of Saul, deep to the core he viewed
Sapped by the root of evil, to the verge
Extreme of hope, yet in the slumber wrapped
Of confidence misplaced, that most the heart
Uncentinels.

"By what swift antidote
Of force or fraud, shall he from traitorous tongues
The Hebrew king disthrall? How bring again
The exile shepherd? Soon the coming morn
(Which if the voice of rumour speak not false
Must bring the final battle,) shall make red

The eastern sky. "Where is the Edomite?
Why to the camp returned he not with Saul?
What purpose in the quiver of his heart,
Lies for destruction hidden? Lesser ills
That grow unseen, oft deeper menace hold
Of woe, than greater evils by the light
Of observation visited. The ledge
Of time, on which the rampart must be piled,
Against the onset of his treachery,
Each instant narrows."

Through the son of Ner
Such musings passed, when in his presence, stood
The eldest born of Saul.

To whom thus first
The warrior: "Prince, why com'st thou? Why is rent
Thy mantle? What new grief hath on our state
Been poured? How fares the King?"

To whom the son
Of Saul: "O, Abner, well my heart hath read
The tokens of this time. I come not now
For counsel; wisdom's voice may prop our house

No more. Whate'er high faith to valour joined
Strong as a mountain torrent, might achieve,
Hath by thine arm been wrought, whilst from thy lips
Hath flowed a tide oracular, which more
Than wall of tenfold brass, our state hath fenced;
But all is vain. Our deeds against the will
Celestial, with recoil retributive,
Upon our root like barbed shafts have rushed
With desolating power; nor might the force
Of mortal hand suffice to ward their stroke,
Or pluck them forth: and ere to-morrow's light
Shall from this region pass, upon the field
Saul and his sons must lie in fight oppressed:
So speaks the voice prophetic. Seek we now
The royal tent; but first, to Gibeah speed
A bearer of these tidings; thus my sire
Commands: anon, I will recount the rest
Of that which in this night of woe hath sprung."

As when upon his path, who tracks, perforce,
With lonely foot, some tangled wilderness,
Where Nile or Ganges, through a thousand climes,
Sweeps to the briny flood some monster huge
With famished howl, and glance of living fire

Sudden appears, fear-struck, the wanderer starts,
And for escape interrogation makes
Of wildered thought; so at those words the son
Of Ner amazèd stood; one hope alone,
A beam, like lamp sepulchral, o'er that gloom
Diffused, whereof he thus to Jonathan
Participation tendered.

"Prince, thy sire
Hath been deceived: some tongue accursed with him
Who with incessant hate pursues our house
Hath leagued, and with a phantom terror, seeks
To dull your valour in to-morrow's fight."

To whom the prince: "Abner, I may not doubt:
Thou know'st not all. O, haste thy messenger;
This night alone is ours."

He ceased, nor him
With farther questioning the warrior urged.
The monarch's bidding is obeyed, and now
To where in mournful conference yet stood
Saul and his sons, they passed. With rev'rence low,
The warrior, to the King and princes twain

Mute salutation made, then silent gazed
Upon those mourners, in perplexity
Of spirit, with what unguent of sweet words,
He might with sorrow cope, on earth scarce matched:
Yet to abstain from speech, (though impotent
Against that hour of grief, as is the gleam
Of stars to quell the rage of northern frost,)
He had no power, by strong fidelity
Impelled, and thus he spake:

"Monarch, I know,
That, which by revelation of itself,
Rebukes the vigour of our life, and blends
Our noon with timeless night. The words of him,
Who seeks on woe supreme to shed the ray
Of consolation, oft in mockery
Seem clad; and sympathy, by desperate grief
Of her own nature robbed, may strive in vain
To soothe. Yet now, if haply through long years,
My faithfulness by deeds unto thy throne
Hath of itself made proof; if in the field,
Or at the council, Abner hath the front
Endured of dangers of all qualities;
If, not *thy frown* might drive me from my watch

Of peril imminent, nor chain my tongue
To guilty silence though its voice was heard
In discord with thine own; then deem me true
When by thy life I swear, that in the grief
Which rends thy heart, I deep communion feel:
And though my name by the prediction dire
That threats thy house to-morrow, be ungrasped,
Think not I thence draw hope, nor would outlook
The storm that round thee lowers. To *thee*, O King,
This arm, this life is pledged: for *thee*, my sword
Hath strown the plain with foes; nor shall the sun,
Whose parting ray upon *thy corse* shall look,
Leave me in life."

So spake the chief, his words
Deep in his heart re-echoed, though on high
Unratified; and him the Hebrew King
Thus answered:

"To my thoughts, thy voice hath given
Response. Yet let me speak. Why shouldst thou fall,
O thou in valour as in faith unmatched?
Thou art without the curse: Ah, wherefore, then,
Shouldst thou by deed extravagant beyond

The range of most devoted service, war
Upon thyself in vain? for though thy form,
Wrapt in munition strong of threefold brass,
'Twixt me and fierce Philistia's host might stand
Throughout to-morrow's fight; and though thine arm
Smote with the force of old Manoah's son
The foes of Israel; thou couldst not shield
My life. Then, peerless Abner, go not forth
(I do intreat thee,) to the coming fight,
Nor by perdition of thy matchless self,
Increase the godless triumph. Of thy love
To Saul, unnumbered deeds have on thine age
Enduring record traced. O live to guard
Our remnant, who from thee shall catch new fires.
David is wise, and gladly round his house,
Will thy allegiance twine. To Gibeah haste,
And raise new powers, who may from rapine wide
Philistia check. O my Ahinoam!
Thanks to the power supernal, that the tomb
Hath o'er thee closed, ere dawns the dreadful day
That now scarce eastward of our land doth hang.
Abner, thou hast my last command. Farewell,
Sweet kinsman. Fly whilst yet the plain
In shade nocturnal lies. Remember Saul."

Scarce had the king thus said, when at his feet
The warrior fell, and with impetuous words
Thus spake:

"O, if thou lovest me, from thy side
Bid me no more. What! have I trod so long
Thy path, in storm, and sunshine, to behold
Thee and my princes, thus by fate impelled
To field disastrous, nor pursue thy course
Through life and death? Say that thou must be stretched
In dust; think'st thou 'twere *nothing* if this arm
Might bear thee wounded from the hideous fray,
And prop thy dying form? or if these eyes
Might catch the parting ray which on that front
In Israel unmatched, shall last reveal
A soul to *me* so dear; or if these hands
Might from thy forehead wipe the icy damps
Of death, or from the alien's scorn inwrap
My king in earth; If I such offices
For thee, or for thy children, might fulfil,
Think'st thou 'twere *nothing?* or if for thy sake,
My hungry falchion on the foe should feed,
Till heaped for thee upon the plain should lie

A wond'rous sacrifice, why this methinks
Would something soothe my pain. Enough of
hearts
Shall to the blast by David's trumpet waked
Responsive thrill, when he our tribes shall call
To vengeance; for myself, I crave but death
With him from whom alone my life hath caught
Its sweetness. By thy love, most noble king,
I do adjure thee hear, nor from thy feet
Will Abner rise, till thou this last bright boon
Shalt yield."

So spake the chief, with utterance swift
That scarce unquelled by sad emotion, flowed;
Nor might that warrior band resist the force
Of faithfulness so strong, in hour extreme
Of grief. All wept, and thus the Hebrew king
'Mid sobs convulsive spake:

"Rise, son of Ner,
O rise! thou hast prevailed. O let us fold
Each to the other's heart once more."

He said,

And to his breast the warrior clasped, who thus
Discourse resumed:

"A messenger e'en now
To Gibeah bears the tidings thou didst send.
Say if in ought thy will is unperformed."
Then Saul:

"No, Abner. Save that for the fight,
I thus command. Myself and Jonathan
Will in the centre guide the shock of war:
Thou, and the other princes, on the left
And right, direct the battle. See where breaks
Upon the eastern sky the hue of morn.
More frequent in the camp, the tread of man
Is heard. What means that shout?"

To whom the prince:
"I marked it not."

Then thus the son of Ner:
"The king was not deceived. One hither comes."

He scarce had ended, when a voice, like his

Who strives with sudden growth of enterprise,
To fill the fleeting moment, at the tent
Of Saul thus cried. "What, ho! awake the king.
Is Abner here?"

To whom, (whilst o'er his face
A deathly paleness spread,) the son of Kish.
"It is the seer that calls. Nathan, approach.
Our light grows dim. Let not the common ear
Our woe partake."

He ceased, and in the tent
With mien of one by sudden terror mazed,
The prophet stood, and thus bespake the king:

"Arm, arm! or for attack, or for repulse
Of instant siege. The foe is in the field.
Swift toward our camp they come, nor since the day
When, in the vale of Elah, Gath's proud son
His challenge breathed, on their array (methinks,)
Hath fiercer menace sat."

Then thus the king:
"Let us upon them straight. Who talks of *siege*?

My armour-bearer, ho! What though ungraved
He stood, and spake my doom? I am myself
Once more. Despair like confidence shall work,
Till fate itself, of its accomplishment
Shall stand in doubt."

So spake the Hebrew king
By heat inborn of nature to the verge
Of phrenzy wrought. In arms he stood, and felt
An exaltation false of soul, by power
Malign infused, which half the memory quenched
Of Endor's gloom, the semblance of a force
That with supernal agency might strive
Not without hope. Such madness, (if the thoughts
Of breasts corporeal, with imaginings
Of essences immortal, may compeer,)
Did o'er that spirit work, or shall inflame
Hereafter, whom the loved of Jesus saw
Make war in Heaven, what time in Patmos' isle
Was rent the veil, that hides from mortal eyes
Celestial things.

In grief the prince beheld
Upon the monarch's brow inscription stamped

Of confidence unblessed; yet answered not.
A moment to the seer he spake, then armed
For that last fight.

Now from the tents is poured
The Hebrew host, and where with Gilboa's roots,
The plain is blended, spreads the dreadful line,
Whilst from the sky looked forth the new-born day.
Now scarce three times the space that from the bow
Of archer strong an arrow may be driven,
Small intervention 'twixt those hostile powers
Yet made. A moment over either host
Each monarch darts his eye; whilst mutual deeds
Of hate implacable, and tokens felt
And given of prowess high, for onset swift
And pause, alternate pleading hold. Now sounds
The shout of war, and with impetuous shock
They close.

But who the hour of fear may paint,
When raging thousands meet? Spear strives with spear,
And brand on brand is dashed; save when the stroke
Unwarded falls, and if the ringing mail
Repel not, drinks the crimson tide. Ranks slay,

And fall; triumphant cries, with groans commix;
And shivered blades, and armour rent, and forms
Of mightiest chieftains on the ensanguined dust
Outstretched, forbid the thought that dares to look
Beyond that dreadful day. Each in himself
Alone, for one brief moment trusts, whilst sword,
Or javelin, or helm, or bossy shield,
Repulses yet the thousand shapes of death
That rage around.

But chiefly where the son
Of Kish, and Jonathan the war direct,
The battle maddens. As two mountain streams
(Upon whose rocky bed the southern blast
In sudden dissolution hath outpoured
The snows by winter piled,) with force immense,
Rush to the plain below, and on some scene
Of plenty, black destruction hurl; so came
The Hebrew monarch, and his eldest born
Upon Philistia's host. Together fly
Their spears with aim unerring, nor may plate
Of closest mail, the murderous point repel.
Two warriors lie in blood. Again, again,
The impetuous lance disparts the passive air,

And six proud sons of Gath, upon the plain
Of Palestina gasp. With joy the king
Of Israel beheld, and thus with voice
That far above the din of fight prevailed,
He called the squadrons that around him fought.

"Upon the foe with *me.* Think of the stone
Of *Ebenezer,* and the day of fame
In *Elah,* and at *Michmash.* Let us fall,
Or to eternal silence, chase yon dogs,
Who dare our land pollute!"

So cried the king,
Whilst from the sheath, his ponderous falchion flew
That lurid lightning cast: scarce might two arms
Throughout the tribes of Israel, suffice
To wield the massive weight, which as a wand,
With rapid circuit round his giant form
With *single grasp* he swung. Upon the host
Of the uncircumcised, pale horror sat
As rushed the monarch, and his matchless son
To closest conflict, by a warrior tide
Pursued. Now heaps on heaps Philistia's dead
Upon the plain are piled, and had the wrath

Of Heaven less burned against the house of Saul,
That hour the Gentile had to foul defeat
Been turned.

With grief the son of Maoch viewed
His ranks disordered, and the hope from voice
Prophetic drawn, o'erthrown, unless some act
Of valour prompt, the battle might restore.
Swift to the van he flies, and where those chiefs
Of Israel, their path of ruin tread,
Directs his way; a band in might unmatched
Throughout Philistia's camp attends his steps.

"And is it *thus* (he cried in tone of scorn)
Women in *deeds,* and *lions* in *debate,*
That ye will guard your names from infamy?
Say, O degenerate sons, in nurture bred
Of dauntless prowess, where is *now* the vaunt,
That each *alone* might with the king compare
Of Israel? And whither will ye fly?
What city with munition of her walls
Will shield your fear? Stand! conquer! for the maw
Of beast, or ravening fowl, alone shall hide
The coward's form."

He said, and from his words
Valour from shame engendered, in the hearts
Of those Philistines grew; the battle shout
They raise, and hand to hand the mortal fray
They join. Full in the front fierce Achish waves
His reeking brand, that with impetuous sweep
Of instant carnage on the Hebrew host
Swift retribution made. The son of Kish
Beheld his onset, and with eager foot,
Upon him came. Whom thus the king of Gath
Bespake:

"Well met, insane of heart, who strivest
So with thy fate. Yield thee, ere in the dust
This arm shall stretch thy pride. Know that the doom
That numbers with the dead, thee and thy house,
And of thy power a banquet vast shall spread
For beast and fowl, to me hath been revealed.
Pluck from thy head that beaming crown, unclasp
Those bracelets from thy hands, and at my feet
In supplication fall; if haply *thus*,
Thou from my clemency shalt win the life
Thy God denies."

'He said, and in the heart
Of Saul, relumed the memory unblessed,
Which in that hour of strife, had clad itself
In halo mixed, of doubt, and hope: again
In Endor's cave he stood, again he hears
The phantom's warning voice. But most he grieved,
Lest from those boding words, fear yet unfelt,
Upon his host should fall. Yet burned his soul
With rage ineffable, against that speech
Of high contempt, as with defiance bold,
He thus replied:

"Cry to the whirlwind's blast
Uncircumcisèd fool, when crackling woods
With thousand thousand arms oppose in vain
Its course of ravage, and if at thy word
It pause, then hope with menace impotent
To daunt my stedfast spirit. For the rest,
Look on the field with thine own dead high piled
And there, a divination read of fear,
Writ by my conquering sword."

He ceased, and both
Prepared for deeds adventurous, at once

The sky their lances cleave, but from his aim
Fierce Achish errs; not so the son of Kish;
Through shield, and corslet, drove his knotty spear,
And if the chain of triple gold that joined
The mail, to course oblique, the rushing point
Had not inclined, deep in the monarch's heart
It had been fixed. Yet so, not bloodless passed
The impetuous stroke; but where the ribs no more
Their curve defence extend, rent all his side.
Forth from the wound hath gushed the vital stream,
And round their king in sad disorder, press
His faithful guards.

Onward the son of Kish,
And he who next him stood in Israel,
(Like to the blast of flame, that roams the wild,
With desolating wing,) resistless trod:
Together waved their falchions huge, nor force
Of armour, nor evasive art, might stay
Or 'scape their edge. Upon the strong, the weak
Are piled in death, swift pour the exulting tribes
Where leads their dauntless king, who thus with voice
As of three warriors joined their spirits' fires.

"*Now, now,* ye heroes of renown unmatched,
Look on your father's deeds; and to the age
Unborn, O fling the echo of your own.
Seize Gath's proud ruler! Shekels bright of gold
And lowing herds, that on my pastures graze,
Shall round him shed my favour infinite
Who shall *his* flight prevent."

The monarch ceased,
And in the soul of Maoch's haughty son,
Rage till that hour unfelt, awoke. Again
He strives his sword to wield, whilst from the wound,
Forced by that effort vain, the gory tide
Fresh streamed. His guards beheld, and with prompt act
Of duteous zeal, their king restrain. With speed,
Some to the van advance, where through all force,
With lightning tread, the Hebrew monarch broke,
And with interposition valorous
Of life, a moment check his fell career:
Some from the fray the groaning Achish bear
With swift fidelity. Stung at the sight,
On rushed the son of Kish: his pond'rous sword
On either hand disparts the routed war:
The prince is at his side, and now he gains

The circle innermost, whose arms sustain
The Gentile king.

"One effort more (he cries
With furious shout) and he is ours. This day
Is ours!"

So speaking, in the dust he stretched
Him nearest in his path, and snatched his spear.
Full at the breast of Maoch's son, it flies,
But on his shield, and in his bleeding form,
A vassal true, hath stayed the deadly stroke:
Supine he falls, and cries,

"O save your King!
Or feed remorse hereafter, on the waste
Of your own souls."

He said, and at his word
The war rekindled, thrice three valiant chiefs,
(Kindred to him of giant mould, who erst
By David's arm was slain,) as o'er the field
They ranged in might uncheckt, beheld where toiled
Philistia's sons around their stricken king.

Swift to the van they fly, and in their course,
Nine bows, (which other arm throughout that host
For archery renowned, had vainly striven
To bend,) they draw, till at each breast the shaft
Is stayed; then loose the string: twangs the strained
wood,
And in the dust nine Hebrews lie. Again
Their bows those chieftains bend, again descends
The shower with carnage fraught. And now from earth
A spear of matchless length each pulls, and where
Saul and the prince, almost the Gentile king
Have won, they speed. Dismayed, the tribes recoil;
But nought of mortal mould, (though armed with
might
Like that of those, perchance not *all* from *earth*
Derived, who ere the avenging waters broke
On this polluted sphere, their darkened age
With deeds prodigious filled,) that hour might daunt
The son of Kish.

A thrust of truest aim,
(Which through the neck had else a passage rent,)
His falchion wards: with disappointed force,
His foeman bends, and ere his outstretched arm

He may retract; upon the rib-like bone
Which from the shoulder toward the throat is
curved,
Descends the monarch's blade, and as through air
The impetuous eagle sweeps, so through that form
The piercing metal passed. Headless he falls,
A shout of triumph from the tribes hath burst;
Again, upon the uncircumcisèd host
They press; they slay, they die, and acts of might
Reciprocal still hold that day in doubt.

Yet from the field, his faithful guards have borne
Their wounded king, to where from tumult far,
By skilful hand applied, the soothing juice
From plants expressed, or wept in fragrant tears
By force of nature, sweet forgetfulness
Instils of pain, that from no mortal hurt
Arose. Now for the war fierce Achish burns,
Though not as yet he may endure the weight
Of arms; but to the centre of his host
He hies, where still the battle raves. With joy,
Philistia's sons their king beheld; whom thus,
Sage Tamis, priest of Dagon's shrine, (who most
The monarch's inmost bosom swayed,) bespake:

"Seest thou, O Achish, how yon dogs to-day
The field maintain? Nor, in his heart who well
The ground surveys, at this would marvel spring;
For by the divination yesternight
Revealed, led on, something too much, methinks,
We scorn the tendencies of our own acts,
And to a cause of ruin, vainly strive
To link effect propitious. Wherefore else,
Risk we the battle thus at Gilboa's foot
With foes who from above contend? 'Tis this
Which to their onset gives a force, that scarce
Our labouring ranks sustain, and mars the hope
Which in our chariots lies. Let now my voice
Thy counsels rule; bid toward the right and left,
Our deep array fall back, as though compelled
By yonder chiefs: the Hebrews will pursue,
And when no more in order close shall stand
Their centre, from their other host advanced,
Then let our bowmen ply their deadly art,
Whilst on the foe from either hand, shall pour
Our horsemen; so by armèd crescent prest,
To flight inglorious shall those squadrons turn,
Or perish without hope."

So spake the priest;
To whom the son of Maoch: "Still thy word,
O Tamis, like a wall impregnable,
Doth to thy country, strong munition give,
It shall be *thus*."

He said, and instant flew
The swift command.

Meanwhile the son of Ner,
(Who on the left the host of Israel
Led on) with wondrous might that day had striven
Against the Gentile power: compeer in arms
He met not: like the burning river heaved
From hill volcanic, so his withering course
All strength derides.

Two chiefs of stature vast
(The boast of Ashkelon,) his valiant arm
First felt. A mace that like the ethereal bolt
Resistless smote, the giants swung, nor less,
Than for four chieftains valorous, they seemed
Fit match. Together where the wasting brand
Of Abner swept, they rushed; nor shunned the chief

That dire attack. His spear, (whose length, scarce less
Than branch that from some tree of lofty growth
Afar its shadow flings, did from his grasp
On either side extend) with force immense
He hurls: full on the coat of linked mail,
Above the shield, the massy point descends,
And where the cup receives the various play
Of the right shoulder, drives, till far beyond
The back, it gleams. Down from the warrior's hand,
The useless mace hath dropt, and o'er his sense
Hath spread a deathy swoon: In speechless woe,
His loved companions bear him from the fray,
And mourn the expiring chief.

Swift to revenge
His fall, his kinsman flies, nor in the breast
Of forest monster, whom the hunter's art
Hath of her offspring reft, e'er wakes such rage,
As shook that Gentile heart. Two of the house
Of Ner beheld his course, and thus bespake
The captain of the Hebrew host:

"Enough,
O matchless Abner, hath thy might this day

Been proved: O, shun yon raging chief, nor quench
The glories of our race."

They ceased, nor stayed
For answer, but where came with lightning tread
The prince of Ashkelon they haste, in hour
Unblest. At once their lances fly, at once
Back from the shield the blunted weapons bound:
A smile of scorn the foeman's lip hath curled,
To right and left hath swept his pond'rous mace,
And flesh, and bone, and firmest panoply,
In gory ruin crushed, to death's long night
The Hebrew brothers sink.

With fruitless speed
The sorrowing Abner to avert their doom
Had onward rushed. To whom with scornful speech
The fierce Philistine thus:

"Haste thee, profuse
Of life, and with thy blood the famine feed
Of vengeance infinite. Upon yon mass
Of carnage look, and read the fate of those
Who dare *my* course resist."

To whom the son
Of Ner: "With *deeds*, not *words*, O arrogant
Of tongue, the brave in arms contend; and he
Who of the future speaks, as of the past,
Contempt, not *fear*, engenders, in the wise
Of heart, and from the truth may widely err
As on thyself, perchance, this hour shall prove."

He ceased, and both for final act prepared,
Now front to front they stand, each from his eyes
Incessant flame at other casts, nor less
Than for decision of that war, they seemed
In conflict met. Their weapons high in air
Both raise, but from attack, the wary son
Of Ner, his arm withholds, lest by the mace,
If haply crossed, his falchion should be dashed
In fragments at his feet. His cautious eye
The fierce Philistine's hand still marks, and where
Descends the lightning stroke, his shield he turns
And on the boss which in the centre guards
The far expanded orb, the shock receives.
The stricken metal clangs; and backward shrinks
(What could he less, though cast in firmest mould?)
The son of Ner by that rude stroke compelled:

Yet not the more, fruitless of exploit passed
That moment perilous; full on the helm
Of the uncircumcised, the Hebrew sword
Fell with resistless sweep, and through the hide
With plate metallic fenced, and through the skull,
E'en to the brain its murderous path hath rent.
The Gentile falls, and with the ensanguined tide
His life hath gushed. Upon his foeman's neck
Fierce Abner plants his foot, as thus with cry
That through the adverse war pale horror shot,
He called the exulting tribes.

"So perish all
The haters of our race. *Now,* valiant sons
Of sires in arms unmatched, beneath whose sword
The brood of Anak fell, your valour prove:
Let not the foe their chariots gain; O, haste
With me, and sweep them into night."

As when
The briny flood, by earth's convulsion driven
Beyond the accustomed ebb, (till ocean forms
In dereliction of their watery breath
Gasp on the sandy ooze,) with threefold might

Invades some strand unblessed, and high o'erleaps
The utmost point to which the mystic call
Of the pale moon invites; so at that shout,
The Hebrew host swept on. In chill dismay,
The uncircumcised recoil; and in the heart
Of Ner's great son, the thought that from his will
Jehovah haply had gone back, diffused
A ray scarce visible which in an hour
Less smit by desolation, of his soul
Had claimed no note. So from organic things,
O'er which decay hath past, oft wakes a beam,
(Perchance of birth phosphoric,) by the sense
Unfelt, save when by deepest gloom involved.

Now through all fnight, resistless Abner breaks,
And scarce the prince who on Philistia's right
The war led on, his bands from flight withholds.
Sage Tamis saw his grief, and thus with words
Of health bespake the hero:

"Prince, to-day
Methinks against the immortal powers doth war
The force of man; yet let us to ourselves
Be faithful still, and by my life, yon sun

Shall on our triumph shine. Maintain the fight
Awhile: I'll to the King, and prompt supply
Of force shall aid thy valour."

So the priest;
Who (ere he to the centre passed,) thus roused
The uncircumcisèd host.

"Shame on ye now
(Valiant in *vaunts* alone,) what! have ye left
Your homes, with glory of your sires adorned,
To perish without fame? And will ye turn
Your backs upon a conquered foe? The gods
Themselves with us confederation make,
And will ye quail at mortal force? Go to!
Remember now your might, or, by the shrine
Of Dagon! at my word, the hands which guard
Your cars, shall from each axle rend the wheels
To which for flight ye trust."

He ceased, and force
Was with those accents, through each Gentile heart
Diffused, the battle-shout they raise, and join
Once more the shock of death. Now sped the priest

To where, as yet unscathed, fierce Achish strove;
And in his course, beheld how in the ranks
Of Israel the sword of Athroch made
Swift waste. Athroch, than whom a chief of soul
More large, in Ekron was not found: to him,
Nor mightiest deed in arms, nor wise resolve
'Mid counsels most perplexed, scarce effort seemed:
His country's love alone his bosom fired,
Nor ought save lightest taint, which on his life
From act or thought might flow, had power to shake
His soul with fear.

To whom the pontiff thus:
"O thou, who by achievement of high things,
Dost o'er the tenor of thy wondrous life
Incessant glory cast, obey my voice.
Let others here sustain the storm of war;
But to our right, (where scarce the onset fierce
Of Ner's impetuous son our ranks abide,)
O haste, and quell the hand, that like some power
Of more than human essence, threats to-day
Destruction to our hope. Hath not his arm
Already laid in dust the matchless pair
Of Ashkelon?"

He ceased, to whom the lord
Of Ekron: "Sage, whate'er my hand, through help
Of the celestial natures, may fulfil,
This hour demands, where bids thy voice, I speed."

He said, and passed, and now where in the van
Fierce Abner thins the uncircumcisèd war
He shines in dreadful might.

Swift to oppose
His course Salathiel flies: two pond'rous spears
At shortest interval he hurls, but both
His aim deceive, yet in the dust are stretched
Two of the house of Athroch, in his heart
By links close twined, whose coil of temper high,
From elements immortal springs: his steps,
Since first the intelligential dawn had shed
Its light around their souls, they had pursued,
And late from Ekron, to that doubtful war,
The path they trod, which with no homeward track
Their feet shall mark.

Raging, the hero viewed
His kinsmen laid in death, and from his hands

As by the impulse of two warriors driven
His spear hath fled, and through all panoply,
To where in twice ten thousand cells diffused,
The vital river feels the crimsoning touch
Of outward air, its passage rends. Supine
The Hebrew falls, and o'er his limbs is twined
The clasp of death.

Upon the tribes the lord
Of Ekron rushed, by thirst of glory urged,
Which 'gainst the utmost force by mortal arm
On battle-field e'er wielded, without fear
Had striven. To chase at once the adverse host
In utter rout he trusted, whilst with spear
Or flashing brand the plain with bravest foes
He strewed.

In grief profound Elnathan marked
The fierce Philistine's course, and thus bespake
The chief who next him fought.

"O thou whose hand
Can with such wondrous skill the rushing stone
From sling direct, where is thy boasted art?

Or what avails it *now*, that through thy veins
Their blood is poured, who in this kind supreme
In Benjamin erst stood, what time his sons
Against their kindred, in unhallowed war,
(Touching the Levite's desperate wrong,) were ranged ?
O smite yon man of death that with such ire
Insatiable, thus wastes our host."

To wnom
The Benjamite. "Elnathan, mortal skill
May ne'er by utmost growth uplift itself
Above the current of mischance ; some power
Methinks, or from within, or from without,
To-day my hand doth mock, else in the dust
Three warriors had been stretched, at whom in vain
This thong a bolt hath launched ; yet at thy word,
Once more I will essay my art."

He said,
And in the hide a pondrous flint he fixed,
Then whirled in airy circle, till with force
From that swift motion caught, he loosed the mass.
With sudden hum is cleft the smitten sky,
And, but that Ekron's lord his lofty form

To tear his weapon, from a fallen foe
Had bent, that hour perchance, had seen him laid
Upon the battle-field. Yet not so passed
Innocuous the pointed stone, but o'er
The utmost circle of the bossy shield,
Upon the tube, through which the aërial stream
In ceaseless flow and ebb with life doth blend,
Resistless fell, and on the plain was stretched
A youth, by none in spirit valorous
Surpassed. Scarce had his twentieth spring entwined
Her fragrant garland, when the blast was blown,
Which for invasion of the chosen race,
Philistia roused; nor wealth, nor blooming bride,
Nor supplication of his weeping sire,
Might quench the thirst of fame that all his soul
Consumed: With Ekron's lord in evil hour
He left his native fields, which never more
His foot shall print. Like some bright flower, by storm
Untimely smit, the youthful warrior falls,
And death's last struggle shakes his beauteous limbs.

The sorrowing Athroch o'er his follower bends,
And thus a second bolt eludes, impelled

By the same hand, with force scarce less, than flings
Skyward, the sulphurous mass, or from the throat
Of Ætna, or Vesuvius, or where else
The expansive energy of air and fire
Hath pierced the crust, that from the eye of day,
Earth's deep combustion seals.

Now toward the son
Of Ner, fierce Athroch speeds, and at his side,
The eldest born of Achish, who that day
Led on Philistia's right. Their furious course,
Elnathan viewed, and to oppose them, sped
Along the dreadful line: his high intent
The brave Barbaruch marked, around whose soul
The noon of life meridian vigour cast:
In him, high prowess (of the help that flows
From voice of counsel, not unmindful,) wrought
Its way to glory. Toward Elnathan, hies
The valiant chief, and thus him first bespeaks:

"Go not alone, against yon raging pair:
The son of Achish, for *thine arm*, (though strong,)
Or *mine*, (though not unpractised to endure
Impetuous deeds,) were match; that well demands

The utmost force; but he who with him comes,
Far more resistless treads the field of war.
To me, not all unknown his tow'ring form
Appears, who erst with carnage hath our plains
Bespread in days gone by. His spear, the plate
Of firmest panoply may scarce repel,
And in the circuit of his pond'rous sword,
There dwells a might, that like a pestilence
All strength doth scorn. With thee I will essay
Yon chiefs, and may the Power from whose behest
Do spring the issues of all purposes,
In favour look on us!"

He ceased, and now
Within a javelin's cast, the warriors stand:
At once their arms are backward drawn, at once
Their spears are hurled, nor shall Philistia's prince,
Nor brave Elnathan quit the field with life;
So well fierce Athroch and Barbaruch wrought
The work of death.

The son of Ner beheld,
And thus with words of intervention, strove
If haply yet he might from foes so fell,

Barbaruch save. "Hold, Athroch! Well I know
Thy form, nor is the son of Ner, methinks,
To thee unknown. I do defy thee, chief:
On *me* bend all thy rage whose arm hath still
Bereaved thy land. Confront me if thou dar'st."

Thus Abner cried, whilst reckless of the voice,
The warriors met in strife, that long in doubt
Hung not. A stroke which all defence had riven,
(As cleaves a wand the snaring tapestry
Of insect art,) the fierce Philistine wards,
And where the indented bone which to the hand
Revolving motion gives, receives the ball
Of the right arm, descends his wasting brand,
And through the various work by nature wrought,
Of tube or sinew, rends. Upon the plain
The limb (that still with grasp convulsive, holds
The falchion,) lies: around the smitten chief,
The succour prompt of warriors valorous
Is gathered; from the fight their loved compeer
They guard, whilst all his sense a death-like drowse
Involves.

Now as a rock, that from some cliff,

(Mined by the ceaseless tooth of Ocean's wave,)
Rolls downward to the flood with headlong course,
So rushed impetuous Abner on the lord
Of Ekron, who him thus bespake:

"Come on,
Insatiable of blood; for by the powers
Invisible, I swear, that since our hosts
Did first to-day the shock of battle join,
I have desired to meet thee thus."

e ceased,
Nor, (save with glance which more than fiercest words
Shot presage of dire onset,) deigned reply
The son of Ner. His ponderous blade, that reeked
With slaughter infinite, each lifts on high,
And force encounters force, and art with art
Confronted, instant replication makes
Of peril imminent. Long time they stand
Upon the edge of doubt, and on that strife
Admiring squadrons to forgetfulness
Of their own deeds, awhile their spirits gaze.
At length the son of Ner, (as though outvexed
By that long fight,) from all attack refrains;

Content by shield, or brand, or motion prompt
Of frame, to stay or scape the strokes that fall
With force prodigious from the unwearied arm
Of Ekron's lord, who on his prowess high
Confiding, to the assault his fiery soul
Unreined, whilst of himself his watch relaxed.
The son of Ner beholds, and more and more,
In semblance of abating force, each act
Invests; till of all vigilance beguiled,
His foeman's form alone the Gentile scans,
Where most, with hope of blood he shall direct
His sword. The Hebrew saw: and now with force
Immense, as at the first, fierce Athroch's blade
He crossed, and from his grasp unwary, struck
His weapon to the dust; nor staid, but back
From left to right, his glittering falchion swung,
And on the neck the lord of Ekron smote.

A shout of triumph from the Hebrew host,
Far o'er the field resounds, as falls in death
The uncircumcised, and with redoubled might
The foe they charge.

As thus with mutual deeds

Of hate, both armies strove, the orient clime
Far into day had passed; and now the will
Of the Celestial King, touching the war,
Did of itself, by presage dolorous,
A revelation make. And first, where fought
Fierce Malchis on Philistia's left, declined
The light of Israel. Throughout the host
Of the uncircumcised, his peer in arms
Stood not: to hurl the rushing lance, or bend
The bow, with aim unerring, or direct
The falchion's lightning sweep, with force that sought
No second stroke, alike *he* knew: his front
Above each chief, a voiceless challenge flashed
To mightiest foes, and in his heart, was that,
Which more than panoply of triple steel,
Around the essay of adventurous deeds,
Did cast bright augury.

Against him, strove
Long time Ishui and Melchishua,
Who on the right of Israel sustained
The shock of war, with valour, which in hour
Less cursed by Heaven, perchance to foul defeat
The Gentile force had turned. Thrice on the host

Of Maoch's son, by a selected band
Surrounded, broke the princes: and as when
The blast which from the tepid south hath swept
The vapory flood, upon some wood descends,
(What time the autumnal hour in gentle hues
Hath on a thousand leafy tablets graved
His voiceless lament for departed bloom,)
Through all the crackling shade swift ruin spreads;
So through Philistia's war, that onset, thrice
Wide havoc poured; and thrice, the single arm
Of Malchis backward drove the warrior tide
With answer dire of carnage.

Now with rage
Against that Gentile chief, Ishui burns;
Yet from encounter of his matchless force
He shrinks, though brave: the soul that looks unshocked
Upon all fearful things at the high call
Of duty, in that Hebrew breast dwelt not,
And o'er his nature, with afflicting power,
The boding voice in Endor's cave pronounced,
Deep domination held. Now onward came
With quenchless ire, the uncircumcisèd chief;

Where'er his blade descends, nor practised art,
Nor firmest armour short defence might yield:

With grief unfeigned, Chenaniel beheld
His course of death; Chenaniel, whose heart
With truest valour glowed. Dear to the soul
Of him who youngest in the house of Saul
Held princedom, was the chief, nor from his ear,
Melchishua the secret had withheld,
Which o'er that battle hung: in union strong
Of thought and deed, they fought that dreadful day,
As with these words, the chief, the son of Saul,
Bespake:

"Prince, I have lived too long who now
Behold yon leader of that locust train
Thus rage uncheckt. If soon or late shall come
My final hour, I reck not, so remorse
Uplift not, from the past, her voice, and cry,
'Thou hast betrayed thy country.' Stay thee here
Where most thy presence doth our war uphold,
And if the immortal King the hope inspires
That kindles in my breast, fierce as he is,
Beneath *this* arm the proud destroyer falls!"

He ended, nor for answer staid, by fire
Innate of spirit, borne. Melchishua
His steps pursues;

And now their swift approach
The Gentile marks: instant his sheathed brand
Is from his girdle hung, his spear in earth
Is fixed, and to his armour-bearer given
His bossy shield. A bow of wondrous force
He grasps, and from the rattling quiver draws
A barbed death: Upon the bending wood,
Is pressed the shaft, the string his breast hath touched,
'Tis loosed, with speed ineffable the air
It parts, and where the visual ball receives
The river luminous, Chenaniel
It smites, and through the nerve which to the soul,
The rapturous picture of these elements
Doth spread, and through the brain, the arrow drives:
The Hebrew falls, and in his gelid grasp
Death holds another prey.

The son of Saul
A moment o'er his loved companion bends
In woe, which of the menace 'gainst himself

Unloosed, might take no note. A second shaft
From the same hand dismissed, his helm hath struck:
Now starts the prince, and toward Philistia's chief,
Impetuous strides. Fierce Malchis saw; again
His shield before him shines, again his lance
He wields in act to throw; nor less the son
Of Saul for swift decision of high deeds
Prepares: from either hand a javelin flies,
Nor erred they from their aim; each shield is pierced,
But from its onward course, the clasp that joined
The encircling mail, the Hebrew's spear repelled.
Not so the Gentile weapon bloodless passed,
But just beneath the bone, which from before,
The chest defends, Melchishua it smote
And onward drove, to where the spinal trunk
Uprears its sutured growth. The prince in dust
Is stretched, and from the Hebrew host, the wail
Of death hath risen.

The fierce Philistine saw,
And thus with voice, (which scarce the path sublime
Of bird, that with remotest pinion cleaves
The fields of ether, might surmount,) he cried:
"The son of Saul is slain, and by the gods!

Who first shall tear his glittering arms away,
A princedom shall receive."

He said, and rushed
With headlong might upon the Hebrew foe.
Dismayed, Ishui marked his course, nor durst
The chief abide; yet round the fallen prince
The war he roused, ere to a vassal brave
He thus his thoughts expressed:

"Beneldad, speed
To where my sire, and Jonathan, sustain
The centre of our war; say to the prince,
That scarce from flight immediate, I withhold
These labouring squadrons; bid him to our need
Prompt succour bring, if yet *his matchless arm*
May prop our hope: let not thy tongue prevent
The voice of fame, touching Melchishua."

Beneldad heard, and with obedience swift,
Along the line of battle passed.

Meanwhile
The counsel sage of Tamis through the host

Of Israel had wide disorder poured.
Too soon the semblance of defeat had lured
The Hebrew centre from its firm array;
And now, with sudden wheel, Philistia's bands
The foe confront, and from unnumbered bows,
The feathered tempest pour; with murderous aim
Each archer strikes; the field with Hebrew dead
Is heaped, and through the tribes, benumbing fear
Of wrath celestial spreads.

The son of Kish
Beheld the dreadful scene, and all his heart
A withering chill invades; yet not the less,
Of that which still by effort valorous
Might haply be achieved, he essay made,
And through the rushing shafts, that round him fle
Thick as the shower from cloud electrical
Discharged, he onward sped, intent to pierce
That armèd concave: at his side, the prince
Each peril shares, a faithful band (the flower
Of Israel,) their course attends, and now
Once more, their shock through all resistance brok
When like a wave upon some watery plain,
The moan which for Melchishua was raised

Swept from the right, and o'er each Hebrew breast,
Swift fear diffused. The son of Kish hath heard,
And from the work of death his hand he stays,
As from the rear Beneldad came, and thus
The eldest born of Saul bespake:

"O haste,
Great prince, to where Ishui on our right
From rout immediate scarce our bands doth guard.
Hath he not bid thee to his utmost need
Prompt succour bring, if haply yet our hope
Thy matchless arm may prop?"

To whom the son
Of Saul: "What means that mournful cry? How fare
My brothers?"

Then Beneldad: "Prince, the storm
Of death so rages, that with words assured
None may adventure speech, touching the state
Of one, whom shortest interval hath veiled
From his observance. By fierce Malchis pressed,
Almost to instant flight, I left our war:
We stay too long. Away!"

He scarce had ceased,
When from the uncircumcisèd host, arose
A shout of triumph infinite.

"They fly!
The fight is won!"

Such words, with fierce acclaim,
Were heard of voices numberless. The King
In dire amazement stands, whilst from the ranks
Of Israel one, all by dust and gore
Deformed, with utterance, which (by speed perplexed)
Scarce lent development to thought, bespake
The monarch thus:

"O King, the day is lost;
Through all the host swift panic spreads: some say
Ishui and Melchishua are slain.
Our right is fled, and on the left the son
Of Ner yet strives against unnumbered foes.
I do beseech thee, fly, whilst yet the band
That round thee fights, thy path may guard."

As thus

He spake, above the din of battle rose
The voice of Malchis:

"Strike the son of Saul!
(It cried)—With speed another quiver bring.
But that my shafts are spent, this hand had stretched
The prince in dust."

The Hebrew monarch heard,
[illegible] umult raged, of headlong flight
And swift pursuit, he hies, as with these words
Defiance fierce against Philistia's chief
He breathes.

"Turn thee, destroyer, where the King
Of Israel doth bid thee to the proof
Of mortal fight."

Now mid a throng confused,
Of friends with foes commixed, the monarch stood:
Their shields cast off, their weapons on the plain
Of battle strown, some urge inglorious flight,
In terror only strong: some grasp their arms,
Nor all disordered, quit the dreadful field:

Some, or by hate, or high disdain, impelled,
The shock of war renew, and stroke for stroke
In fierce respondence give, nor, save for blood,
Yield up their lives. Distant, or near, the stone,
Or feathered dart, or gleaming lance, from sling,
Or bended bow, or arm of warrior driven,
Destroying sweeps; despair with confidence
In briefest strife yet copes, and each from each
His hope oft rends.

A shout the son of Kish
Hath raised, as once again, in wildest ire,
He rushes to the fight. What voice from far
That cry re-echoes? Toward the Hebrew King,
Who speeds, his helmet cleft, his buckler lost,—
Whilst in his hand the fragment of a blade
May scarce assurance give of brief defence
'Gainst weakest foe?

The son of Kish beholds,
'Tis he himself, Ishui. On his track
Three Gentile archers come, their bows are bent,
They twang, but bloodless fall the shafts, at prey
Too distant launched. With anguish deep, the heart

Of Saul is wrung, and on his brow the hue
Of rage and fear swift alternation makes,
Whilst words like these, from that disordered field,
With shouts commingled rise.

"Save, save your prince!
By Heaven, these kingly bracelets shall *his* arms
Adorn, (of favour infinite the pledge,)
Who from the fight my son shall guard."—"O hate!
Thus to be foiled! Bend now your bows *once more*.
Hold *yet* the string, your steps upon him gain.
Now, *now* the arrows loose! he cannot 'scape."
"One effort more, great prince! relax not yet
Thy speed. Where from the heights of Gilboa blows
The gale that most the archers mocks, thy path
Direct." "How long, O warriors, stand ye *thus*?
What power your sense benumbs that ye so look
Upon his flight unmoved, nor by swift deed
His expectation mar?"

Thus from the bands
Of Israel, who yet the field maintained,
(Though lost beyond all remedy that lay
In mightiest arm,) and from the conquering host,

Arose a mingled cry, whilst toward the prince,
The Hebrew monarch and his eldest born,
Them hied.

Now through the war, (as on the wind,
Are borne the vapoury forms, whence back to earth
Is poured the ambient flood, by ceaseless force
Through upper air diffused,) so from the host
Of Achish sweeps a cohort valorous
On rushing steeds, that through the broken lines
Of Israel, fresh carnage spread, and turn
At once, to flight, or tread to instant death
All prowess down. Malchis the squadron leads
And where the band of Saul almost the prince
Surrounds, he hastes; the peril imminent
The King beheld, and onward rushed. Their slings,
Three vassals brave, in airy circles whirl,
And at Philistia's chief the bolts are launched:
Two bloodless pass, the third a warrior smites
Who next fierce Malchis rode; he falls in death,
Whilst at the Hebrew prince, the uncircumcised
A shaft hath loosed. Full on the neck descends
The ruthless point; prone in the ensanguined dust
Ishui falls, and by a jav'lin's cast
Scarce parted from his sire, his life exhales.

In reckless anguish, round his bleeding form,
His arms the monarch throws, and with vain tears
His wound he bathes; nor might the tramp of steeds,
Nor shout of conquering thousands, nor the clash
Of brands that round him waved, avail to pierce
That rapture of despair, which from all sense
Of outward things, his stricken spirit locked:
And if the few, who still around him fought
With zeal unquenched, (by matchless Jonathan
Sustained,) had not the foe a moment checkt
The meanest hand in all that Gentile host,
Upon the son, the wretched sire, perchance,
Had slain.

And now, as when the electric storm
The unquiet sky invades, clouds follow clouds,
Till mortal ken may not the confine reach
Of that dark canopy, so onward came,
To where alone that faithful band yet strove,
Philistia's horsemen, whilst in accent stern,
The son of Maoch thus their valour roused:

"What fear ye now, O impotent of soul?
Is yonder king upon the plain outstretched,

(Cursed by the immortal powers,) more dread than he
Who stood erewhile, by mighty armies girt?
Or have ye turned to-day, to foul defeat
The tribes of Israel, to pause at last
Before the relicts of their routed war?
Go to! your captives seize, or come no more,
To feast with Achish, in his father's hall:
For by the life of Caphtorim, I swear,
And old Philistim my great ancestors,
That *craven lip* shall ne'er those cups profane,
Which by the brave in arms have still been pressed.

So ended Gath's proud monarch, and his words,
Through every Gentile heart, contagion swift
Of his own rage infused; as through some shade,
By tropic summer parched, from fire, perchance
By flash celestial, or attrition caught
Of waving boughs, combustion instant spreads.
Nor less, that speech of scorn with wakening power
The son of Kish hath touched; from earth he springs,
And foremost of the band, the unequal war
Abides:

To whom his armour bearer thus:

"O king, my warning heed, nor stay we here,
To yield our lives for nought. Behold where flees
Our host to Gilboa's heights; those if we gain,
We yet may rally our afflicted power,
Nor shall Philistia's steeds, a passage find
'Mid yonder crags."

He ceased, the prince his words
Approved, nor did the king that counsel spurn.
At once the hill they climb; the wary foe
Their purpose marks, and instant on their track,
His horsemen come. And now the few, whose shafts
Were yet unspent, the rest protect; and chief
The eldest born of Saul, (in archery
Unmatched in Israel,) with murderous aim,
Each nearest warrior smites. In swift career,
Alike, or stand in war, the destined mark
He knew to strike: from chase so dire, recoil
Philistia's bravest chiefs; and now a point,
In Gilboa's hill is won, which to their steeds
No more a steadfast treading yields.

"Dismount,
(The son of Maoch cries,) and urge on foot

The race; and he who in the dust shall stretch
The Hebrew king, or prince, with dowry vast
Of flocks, my fairest daughter, from these hands
Shall for his bride receive."

He said, and sprang
To earth; and now where Gilboa's mountain rose
More steep, the Gentiles speed. Full in the front,
The half outwearied prey yet toils, and where
The unpractised foot the ground did most betray,
Their course they urge, and with the fear-struck tribes,
O'er rock and glen, in utter rout diffused
They mix.

One band from that disastrous field,
The son of Ner attends; long had he striven,
With force prodigious, 'gainst the conquering foe;
'Till, reft of hope, by path scarce visible
Save to the practised eye, by mountain stream
Hewn out, the king he sought, where rumour false,
Spake of his flight. With toilsome tread and slow,
The steep ravine he climbs, nor trace, nor sound,
Of living thing, upon that search might ray
Of promise shed. Now backward to the plain,

His desperate foot had turned, and vainly there
His blood had flowed, but that his faithful guard
With firm resolve the deed opposed:

In grief
Unspeakable, the chief his course renews;
Nor e'er on earth, beheld his kinsman more.

Meanwhile, the harassed tribes, who yet surround,
The Hebrew monarch, with diminished speed
The mountain climb, by foemen pressed, who late
With force unwasted, from their steeds had leapt.
Near and more near, the exulting hunters threat
The sons of Israel; their bows they bend,
And wounds, and death, amid those scattered bands
They pour. Still on their steps the Gentiles gain,
And when once more, the barbed storm from hands
Unnumbered, on the Hebrews fell, the prince,
(Who hindermost of all the few, that still
With shaft or stone the fierce pursuers galled,
Held on his way,) the doom celestial smote.

The dart which in his quiver last remained,
He on the string had fixed, and at the chief

Who foremost of Philistia's squadrons came,
His aim was bent; already to the wood
The barb is drawn, when rushed the deadly shower,
And through the back, and onward to the fount
That with incessant throb the vital stream
Of thousand branches pours, the arrow drives.
Prone in the dust, the son of Saul is stretched,
And without pang, his heaven-taught spirit quits
This suffering sphere.

A shaft the king hath struck;
But in his tortured breast, that sight of woe
Far deeper pain implanted, as with groan
(That rose not from corporeal agony)
He thus the bearer of his shield bespake:

"Enough, O Abiel! My hour is come.
I pray thee, draw thy sword, and with one stroke,
Divide the chain, that holds me yet in life.
Why should the hand of the uncircumcised,
My impotence insult?"

To whom in fear,
His armour bearer: "Monarch, thy command

Still in my act hath swift fulfilment found;
But from this deed, my heart recoils, for how
Upon my lord the king, shall I put forth
My arm?

As thus he spake, the son of Kish
His brand unsheathed, and on the solar orb,
(From whose meridian glance had eastward rolled
The orient clime,) his mournful gaze he fixed,
Whilst from his bursting soul, these accents broke:

"My kingdom from me rent, my children slain,
My army lost, myself from hope cast out,—
The seer hath spoken well. All is achieved.
David, thou art avenged. Farewell, bright sun!"

He said, and fell upon his falchion's point.
So sank the light of Israel: nor less
Than he, whose harp, in sweet accord was waked
To strains of heavenly birth, with lament meet,
Might sing the sorrows of that dreadful day.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND MURRAY,
OLD BAILEY.